Elizabeth C. Platt

Paris April 29th
1848

From the library of Rev.
Claude Paxo Brodhead
graduate of Princeton
College 1843 and Princeton
Seminary 1847.
Presented by his widow
Josephine P. Brodhead.

Property of the Library
Dept. of Chemistry
Yale

Engd by A. Halbert

Yours very sincerely
H. More

From the Picture painted by Opie, in 1786.
now in the possession of Lady Olivia B. Sparrow

Pubd by Harper & Brothers New York

THE

Complete Works

OF

HANNAH MORE.

VOL. I.

Farley was a little frightened, for he thought he perceived one or two persons behind Flatterwell. Vol. I. page 173.

New-York.

HARPER & BROTHERS, CLIFF STREET.

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1843
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THE

WORKS

OF

HANNAH MORE.

FIRST COMPLETE AMERICAN EDITION.

I.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,

NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1843.

PUBLISHERS' ADDRESS.

When the veil of mortality descends upon splendid genius, that has been long devoted to the instruction and best interests of mankind, the noblest monument that can be erected to commemorate its worth and perpetuate its usefulness, is the collection of those productions which, when separately published, delighted and edified the world.

No writer of the past or present age has equalled Hannah More in the application of great talents to the improvement of society, through all its distinctions, from the humblest to the most exalted station in life. Her works have, indeed, in a very striking manner, and to an extraordinary extent, given a new and most important feature to the moral character of the nation she adorned. They have diffused vital religion, in faith and practice, over districts where its mere external form was before scarcely to be seen; and, what is still more deserving of admiration, this accomplished lady, by the power of her reasoning, and the elegance of her compositions, has succeeded, if the phrase may be permitted, in rendering piety fashionable and popular, where even the name of religion was, and that at no very distant period, treated with indifference, if not with absolute contempt.

After establishing her claim to the highest station in the temple of poetical fame, Hannah More resolved to consecrate her talents wholly to His service from whom she had received them. This determination she carried into effect; and inconceivably great and extensive were the benefits it produced. When licentious principles began to be promulgated with industrious zeal, and to threaten the foundations of all moral and social order, then did this Christian heroine, armed in the panoply of truth, appear foremost to oppose the inroads of the enemies of righteousness. The success was unexampled. The tracts which, with uncommon celerity and admirable judgment, came from her fertile pen, operated like a charm, in confirming the wavering, and appalling the evil mind.

The venerable Bishop Porteus, in a charge delivered to the clergy of his diocess in 1798, having noticed the exertions made by different pious writers to excite the spirit of religion, says, "To these it would now be injustice not to add the name of another highly approved author, Mrs. Hannah More; whose extraordinary and versatile talents can equally accommodate themselves to the cottage and the palace; who, while she is diffusing among the lower orders of the people an infinity of little religious tracts, calculated to reform and comfort them in this world, and to save them in the next, is at the same time applying all the powers of a vigorous and highly cultivated mind to the instruction, improvement, and high delight of the most exalted of her own sex. I allude more particularly to her last work, on female education, which presents to the reader such a fund of good sense, of wholesome counsel, of sagacious observation, of knowledge of the world and of the female heart, of high-toned morality, and genuine Christian piety; and all this enlivened with such brilliancy of wit, such richness of imagery, such variety and felicity of

allusion, such neatness and elegance of diction, as are not, I conceive, easily to be found so combined and blended together in any other work in the English language. Of the above-mentioned little tracts, no less than two millions were sold in the first year; and they contributed, I am persuaded, very essentially to counteract the poison of those impious and immoral pamphlets, which were dispersed over the kingdom in such numbers by societies of infidels and disaffected persons."

The popularity of Mrs. More's writings, never sensibly diminished, even by the vast increase of excellent and highly esteemed works in every department of literature by which the last twenty years have been distinguished, has been revived to an extent, perhaps, even greater than they achieved in the early period of their existence, by the recent publication of the admirable memoirs of her life and correspondence, prepared with so much skill and judgment by her chosen biographer and literary executor, Mr. Roberts; a work upon which the strongest language of approving criticism has been and still is bestowed by the highest authorities, both in this country and in England. The general acceptation with which those volumes were received, would have encouraged the publishers to follow them with an edition of Mrs. More's writings, even had they not been repeatedly advised and urged to the undertaking, not only by friends and in private, but by the almost united voice of the press throughout the Union. Had they not assumed it, with these inducements, they would have considered themselves as in some measure neglecting a duty, standing as they do in the light of caterers for the literary gratification of the public, whose wishes and opinions they are bound to respect, at least, if not implicitly to follow.

It is hoped and believed that the present collection, which contains all the writings of that eminent lady, in a convenient as well as handsome form, and is published at a very moderate price, will be received with a degree of favour not less cordial and extensive than that which was and still is accorded to the memoirs. To adopt the words of a religious periodical of high character, used in speaking of those volumes, it may be asserted that "it will please the superficial, improve the intelligent, and receive the hearty commendation of the serious reader. The young and the old, the lively and the sedate, will derive from it pleasure and profit."

The publishers cannot refrain from quoting the following just and happy expressions, from another publication devoted to the interests of religion. "But the view of her influence upon mankind will be exceedingly imperfect, unless we take into the estimate the whole number of individuals who have derived already, and will hereafter derive from her writings, the purest principles of religion, philosophy, and virtue. These can never be numbered, but they may safely be put down at millions. Now if all these readers gain but a single important suggestion, are incited to practise a single virtue, or to refrain from a single vice—if but one in ten is made wiser or better by her publications, how immeasurable is the good effected by her mind!"

"A soul thus active, spread out upon so wide a range of objects, impressing its own beauties and breathing its own spirit upon such myriads of kindred beings, demonstrates its own immortality, and proclaims in the history of the world the exhilarating truth, that the united acquisitions of piety, intellect, and virtue, centring their operations on that which is immortal, possess a grandeur which renders the conquests of pride and power insignificant as empty bubbles, and is more substantially glorious than the gorgeous enchantments of imperial magnificence."

PREFACE.

WHATEVER objections may be urged against the literary character of the present day, it must however be allowed to exhibit an evident improvement in some material points. It is for instance, no new observation, that vanity and flattery are now less generally ostensible even in the most indifferent authors than they were formerly in some of the best. The most self-sufficient writer is at length driven, by the prevailing sense of propriety, to be contented with *thinking* himself the prime genius of the age; but he seldom ventures to *tell* you that he thinks so. Vanity is compelled to acquire or to assume a better taste.

That spirit of independence also, which has in many respects impressed so mischievous a stamp on the public character, has perhaps helped to correct the style of prefaces and dedications. Literary patronage is so much *shorn of its beams*, that it can no longer enlighten bodies which are in themselves opake; so much abridged of its power that it cannot force into notice a work which is not able to recommend itself. The favour of an individual no longer boasts that buoyant quality which enables that to swim which by its own nature is disposed to sink. The influence of an Augustus, or a Louis Quatorze, of a Mæcenas, a Dorset, a Halifax, could not now procure readers, much less could it compel admirers for the panegyrist, if the panegyrist himself, could command admiration on no better ground than the authority of the patron. The once dilated preface is shrunk into plain apology or simple exposition. The long and lofty dedication (generally speaking) dwindled into a sober expression of respect for public virtue, a concise tribute of affection to private friendship, or an acknowledgment for personal obligation. It is no longer necessary for the dependant to be profane in order to be grateful. No more are all the divine attributes snatched from their rightful possessor, and impiously appropriated by the needy writer to the opulent patron. He still makes indeed the eulogium of his protector, but not his apotheosis. The vainest poet of our days dare not venture, like him who has however so gloriously accomplished his own prediction, to say, in so many words, that his own work is *more sublime than the royal heights of pyramids*. Nor whatever secret compact he may make for his duration, does he openly undertake to promise for his verse, that it shall flow *coequal with the rivers and survive the established forms of the religion of his country*. The most venal poetic parasite no longer assures his protector, with 'unhappy Dryden,' that mankind can no more subsist without *his* poetry (the earl of Middlesex's poetry!) than the world can subsist without the daily course of Divine Providence. And it is but justice to the more sober spirit of living literature to observe, that our modesty would revolt (putting our sense and our religion out of the question) were a modern poet to offer even an imperial patron to pick and choose his lodging among the constellations; or, as some author has expressed it on a similar occasion, 'to ask what apartment of the zodiack he would be pleased to occupy.'

So far at least our taste is reformed. And may we not venture to hope, from the affinity which should subsist between correct judgment and unadulterated principle, that our ideas of truth and manly integrity are improved also?

But it is time that I confine myself to the more immediate objects of the present address, in which, in avoiding the exploded evil I have been reprobating, I would not affectedly run into the opposite, and perhaps prevailing extreme.

It may not, it is presumed, be thought necessary to apologise for the publication of this collection, by enumorating all the reasons which produced it. 'Desire of friends,' is now become a proverbial satire; the poet is driven from that once creditable refuge, behind which an unfounded eagerness to appear in print used to shelter itself; and is obliged to abandon the untenable forts and fastnesses of this last citadel of affectation. Dr. Johnson's sarcasm upon one plea will apply to all, and put to flight the whole hackneyed train of false excuses—'If the book were not written to be printed, I presume it was printed to be read.'

These scattered pieces, besides that they had been suffered to pass through successive editions, with little or no correction, were in their original appearance, of all shapes and sizes, and utterly unreducable to any companionable form. Several new pieces are here added, and most of the old ones considerably altered and enlarged.

I should blush to produce so many slight productions of my early youth, did I not find reason to be still more ashamed, that after a period of so many years the progress will be found to have been so inconsiderable, and the difference so little apparent.

If I should presume to suggest as an apology for having still persisted to publish, that of the latter productions, usefulness has been more invariably the object; whereas in many of the earlier, amusement was more obviously proposed; if I were inclined to palliate my presumption by pleading

That not in Fancy's maze I wander'd long;

it might be retorted that the implied plea, in favour of the latter publications, exhibits no sure proof of humility in this instance than in the other. That, if in the first it was no evidence of the modesty of the writer to fancy she could amuse, in the last it furnishes little proof of the modesty of the woman to fancy that she can instruct. Now to amuse, or to instruct, or both, is so undeniably the intention of all who obtrude their works on the public, that no preliminary apology, no prefatory humiliation can quite do away the charge of a certain consciousnes of talents which is implied in the very undertaking. The author professes his inability but he produces his book; and by the publication itself controverts his own avowal of alleged incapacity. It is to little purpose that the words are disparaging while the deed is assuming. Nor will that profession of self-abasement be much regarded, which is contradicted by an act that supposes self-confidence.

If however there is too seldom found in the writer of the book, all the humility which the preface announces, he may be allowed to plead on humility, which is at least comparative. On this ground may I be permitted to declare, that at no period of my life did I ever feel such unfeigned diffidence at the individual appearance of even the slightest pamphlet (the slenderness of whose dimensions might carry some excuse for the small proportion of profit or pleasure it conveyed) as I now feel at sending this, perhaps too voluminous, collection into the world. This self-distrust may naturally be accounted for, by reflecting that this publication is deliberately made, not only at a time of life when I ought best to know my own faults, and the faults of my writings; but is made also at such a distance from the moment in which the several pieces were first struck out, that the mind has had time to cool from the hurry and heat of composition; the judgment has had leisure to operate, and it is the effect of that operation to rectify false notions and to correct rash conclusions. The critic, even of his own works, grows honest, if not acute at the end of twenty years. The image, which he had fancied glowed so brightly when it came fresh from the furnace, time has quenched; the spirits which he thought fixed and essential, have evaporated; many of the ideas which he imposed not only on his reader, but on himself, for originals, more reading and more observation compel him to restore to their owners. And having detected, from the perusal of abler works, either plagiarisms in his own, of which he was not aware, or coincidences which will pass for plagiarisms; and blending with the new judgment of the critic, the old indignation of the poet, who of us in this case is not angry with those who have *said our good things before us?* We not only discover that what we thought we had invented we have only remembered; but we find also that what we had believed to be perfect is full of defects; in that which we had conceived to be pure gold, we discover much tinsel. For the revision, as was observed above, is made at a period when the eye is brought by a due remoteness into that just position which gives a clear and distinct view of things; a remoteness which disperses 'the illusions of vision,' scatters the mists of vanity, reduces objects to their natural size, restores them to their exact shape, makes them appear to the sight, such as they are in themselves, and such as perhaps they have long appeared to all except the author.

That I have added to the mass of general knowledge by one original idea, or to the stock of virtue by one original sentiment, I do not presume to hope. But that I have laboured assiduously to make that kind of knowledge which is most indispensable to common life, familiar to the unlearned, and acceptable to the young; that I have laboured to inculcate into both, the love and practice of that virtue of which they had before derived the principles from higher sources, I will not deny to have attempted.

To what is called learning I have never had any pretension. Life and manners have been the objects of my unwearied observation, and every kind of study and habit has more or less recommended itself to my mind, as it had more or less reference to these objects. Considering this world as a scene of much action, and of little comparative knowledge; not as a stage for exhibition, or a retreat for speculation, but as a field on which the business which is to determine the concerns of eternity is to be transacted; as a place of low regard as an end; but of unspeakable importance as a means; a scene of short experiment, but lasting responsibility; I have been contented to pursue myself, and to present to others (to my own sex chiefly) those truths, which, if obvious and familiar, are yet practical, and of general application: things which if of little show, are yet of some use; and which, if their separate value be not great, yet their aggregate importance is not inconsiderable. I have pursued, not that which demands skill, and ensures renown, but

That which before us lies in daily life.

If I have been favoured with a measure of success, which has as much exceeded my expectation as my desert, I ascribe it partly to a disposition in the public mind to encourage, in these days of alarm, attack, and agitation, any productions of which the tendency is favourable to good order and Christian morals, even though the merit of the execution by no means keeps pace with that of the principle. In some instances I trust I have written seasonably when I have not been able to write well. Several pieces perhaps of small value in themselves have helped to supply in

some inferior degree the exigence of the moment; and have had the advantage, not of superseding the necessity, or the appearance, of abler writings, but of exciting abler writers; who, seeing how little I had been able to say on topics upon which much might be said, have more than supplied my deficiencies by filling up what I had only superficially sketched out. On that which had only a temporary use, I do not aspire to build a lasting reputation.

In the progress of ages, and after the gradual accumulation of literary productions, the human mind—I speak not of the scholar, or the philosopher, but of the multitude—the human mind, Athenian in this one propensity, *the desire to hear and to tell some new thing*, will reject, or overlook, or grow weary even of the standard works of the most established authors; while it will peruse with interest the current volume or popular pamphlet of the day. This hunger after novelty, by the way, is an instrument of inconceivable importance placed by Providence in the hands of every writer; and should strike him forcibly with the duty of turning this sharp appetite to good account, by appeasing it with sound and wholesome aliment. It is not perhaps that the work in actual circulation is comparable to many works which are neglected; but it is *new*. And let the fortunate author militant, of moderate abilities, who is banquetting on his transient, and perhaps accidental popularity, use that popularity wisely; and, bearing in mind that he himself must expect to be neglected in his turn, let him thankfully seize his little season of fugitive renown; let him devote his ephemeral importance, conscientiously to throw into the common stock his quota of harmless pleasure or of moral profit. Let him unaffectedly rate his humble, but not unuseful labours, at their just price, nor despondingly conclude that he has written altogether in vain, though he do not see a public revolution of manners succeed, as he had perhaps too fondly flattered himself, to the publication of his book. Let him not despair, if, though he have had many readers, he has had but few converts. Nor let him on the other hand be elated by a celebrity which he may owe more to his novelty than to his genius, more to a happy combination in the circumstances of the times, than to his own skill or care;—and most of all, to his having diligently observed, that

There is a tide in the affairs of men;

and to his having, accordingly, launched his bark at the favourable flow.

The well intentioned and well principled author, who has uniformly thrown all his weight, though that weight be but small, into the right scale, may have contributed his fair proportion to that great work of reformation, which will, I trust, unless a total subversion of manners should take place, be always carrying on in the world; but which the joint concurrence of the wisdom of ages will find it hard to accomplish. Such an author may have been in his season and degree, the accepted agent of that Providence who works by many and different instruments, by various and successive means; in the same manner as in the manual labour of the mechanic, it is not by a few ponderous strokes that great operations are effected, but by a patient and incessant following up of the blow—by reiterated and unwearied returns to the same object; in the same manner as in the division of labour, many hands of moderate strength and ability may, by co-operation, do that which a very powerful individual might have failed to accomplish. It is the privilege of few authors to contribute largely to the general good, but almost every one may contribute something. No book perhaps is perfectly neutral; nor are the effects of any altogether indifferent. From all our reading there will be a bias on the actings of the mind, though with a greater or less degree of inclination, according to the degree of impression made, by the nature of the subject, the ability of the writer, and the disposition of the reader. And though, as was above observed, the whole may produce no *general* effect, proportionate to the hopes of the author; yet some truth may be picked out from among many that are neglected; some single sentiment may be seized on for present use; some detached principle may be treasured up for future practice.

If in the records of classic story we are told, that 'the most superb and lasting monument that was ever consecrated to beauty, was that to which every lover carried a tribute;' then among the accumulated production of successive volumes, those which though they convey no new information, yet illustrate on the whole some old truth; those which though they add nothing to the stores of genius or of science, yet if they help to establish and enforce a single principle of virtue, they may be accepted as an additional mite cast by the willing hand of affectionate indigence into the treasury of Christian morals.

The great father of Roman eloquence has asserted, that though every man should propose to himself the highest degrees in the scale of excellence; yet he may stop with honour at the second or the third. Indeed the utility of some books to some persons would be defeated by their very superiority. The writer may be above the reach of his reader; he may be too lofty to be pursued; he may be too profound to be fathomed; he may be too abstruse to be investigated; for to produce delight there must be intelligence; there must be something of concert and congruity. There must be not merely that intelligibility which arises from the perspicuousness of the author: but that also which depends on the capacity and perception of the reader. Between him who writes and him who reads, there must be a kind of coalition of interests, something of a partnership (however unequal the capital) in mental property; a sort of joint stock of tastes and ideas. The student must have been initiated into the same intellectual commerce with him whom he studies; for large bills are only negotiable among the mutually opulent.

There are perhaps other reasons why popularity is no infallible test of excellence. Many readers even of good faculties if those faculties have been kept inert by a disuse of exertion, feel often most

sympathy with writers of a middle class; and find more repose in a mediocrity which lulls and amuses the mind, than with a loftiness and extent which exalts and expands it. To enjoy works of superlative ability, as was before suggested, the reader must have been accustomed to drink at the same spring from which the writer draws; he must be at the expense of furnishing part of his own entertainment, by bringing with him a share of the science or of the spirit with which the author writes.

These are some of the considerations, which, while my gratitude has been excited by the favourable reception of my various attempts, have helped to correct that vanity which is so easily kindled where merit and success are evidently disproportionate.

For fair criticism I have ever been truly thankful. For candid correction, from whatever quarter it came, I have always exhibited the most unquestionable proof of my regard, by adopting it. Nor can I call to mind any instance of improvement which has been suggested to me by which I have neglected to profit.* I am not insensible to human estimation. To the approbation of the wise and good I have been perhaps but two sensible. But I check myself in the indulgence of the dangerous pleasure, by recollecting that the hour is fast approaching to all, to me it is *very* fast approaching, when no human verdict, of whatever authority in itself, and however favourable to its object, will avail any thing, but inasmuch as it is crowned with the acquittal of that Judge whose favour is eternal life. Every emotion of vanity dies away, every swelling of ambition subsides before the consideration of this solemn responsibility. And though I have just avowed my deference for the opinion of private critics, and of public censors; yet my anxiety with respect to the sentence of both is considerably diminished, by the reflection, that not the writings but the writer will very soon be called to another tribunal, to be judged on far other grounds than those on which the decisions of literary statutes are framed: a tribunal, at which the sentence passed will depend on far other causes than the observation or neglect of the rules of composition; than the violation of any precepts, or the adherence to any decrees of critic legislation.

With abundant cause to be humbled at the mixed motives of even my least exceptionable writings, I am willing to hope that in those of later date, at least, vanity, has not been the governing principle. And if in sending abroad the present collection, some sparks of this inextinguishable fire should struggle to break out, let it be at once quenched by the reflection, that of those persons whose kindness stimulated, and whose partiality rewarded, my early efforts; of those who would have dwelt on these pages with most pleasure, the eyes of the greater part are closed, to open no more in this world. Even while the pen is in my hand framing this remark, more than one affecting corroboration of its truth occurs. May this reflection, at once painful and salutary, be ever at hand to curb the insolence of success, or to countervail the mortification of defeat! May it serve to purify the motives of action, while it inspires resignation to its event! And may it affect both without diminishing the energies of duty—without abating the activity of labour.

Bath, 1801.

* If it be objected that this has not been the case with respect to one single passage which has excited some controversy, it has arisen not from any want of openness to conviction in me, but from my conceiving myself to have been misunderstood and, for that reason only, misrepresented.

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THE PUPPET-SHOW:

A TALE.

A NOBLE earl!—the name I spare,
From reverence to the living heir—
Lov'd pleasure; but to speak the truth,
Not much refinement grac'd the youth.
The path of pleasure which *he* trod
Was somewhat new, and rather odd;
For, that he haunted park or play,
His house's archives do not say;
Or that more modish joys he felt,
And would in opera transports melt;
Or that he spent his morning's prime
In Bond-street bliss till dinner-time:
No treasur'd anecdotes record
Such pastimes pleas'd the youthful lord.
One single taste historians mention,
A fact unmingled with invention;
It was a taste you'll think, I fear,
Somewhat peculiar for a peer,
Though the rude democratic pen
Pretends that peers are only men.
Whatever town or country fair
Was advertised, my lord was there.
'Twas not to purchase or to sell—
Why went he then? The Muse shall tell.
At fairs he never fail'd to find
The joy congenial to his mind.
This dear diversion would you know?
What was it? 'twas a puppet-show!
Transported with the mimic art,
The wit of Punch enthrall'd his heart,
He went, each evening, just at six,
When Punch exhibited his tricks;
And, not contented every night
To view this object of delight,
He gravely made the matter known
He must and would have Punch his own;
For if, exclaims the noble lord,
Such joys these *transient* views afford
If I receive such keen delight
From a short visit every night,
'Tis fair to calculate what pleasure
Will spring from *owning* such a treasure.
I need not for amusement roam,
I shall have always Punch at home.
He rav'd with this new fancy bit,
Of Punch's sense and Punch's wit.
Not more Narcissus long'd to embrace
The watery mirror's shadowy face;
Not more Pygmalion long'd to claim
Th' unconscious object of his flame;
Than long'd the enamour'd legislator
To purchase this delightful creature.
Each night he regularly sought him,
Nor did he rest till he had bought him.
Soon he accomplishes the measure,
And pays profusely for the treasure:
He bids them pack the precious thing
So careful not to break a spring;
So anxious not to bruise a feature,
His own new coach must fetch the creature!
He safely brought the idol home,
And lodg'd beneath his splendid dome,
All obstacles at length surmounted,
My lord on perfect pleasure counted.

If you have feelings, guess you may
How glad he passed the live long day.
His eating room he makes the station
Of his new favourite's habitation.
'Convivial Punch!' he cried, 'to-day,
Thy genius shall have full display!
How shall I laugh to hear thy wit
At supper nightly as I sit!
And how delightful as I dine,
To hear some sallies, Punch, of thine!'
Next day, at table, as he sat,
Impatient to begin the chat,
Punch was produc'd; but Punch, I trow,
Divested of his puppet-show,
Was nothing, was a thing of wires,
Whose sameness disappoints and tires.
Depriv'd of all eccentric aid,
The empty idol was betray'd.
No artful hand to pull the springs,
And Punch no longer squeaks or sings.
Ah me! what horror seiz'd my lord,
'Twas paint, 'twas show, 'twas pasted-board!
He marvell'd why the pleasant thing
Which could such crowds together bring;
Which charm'd him when the show was full,
At home should be so very dull.
He ne'er suspected 'twas the scenery,
He never dreamt 'twas the machinery;
The lights, the noise, the tricks, the distance,
Gave the dumb idol this assistance.
Preposterous peer! far better go
To thy congenial puppet-show;
Than buy, divested of its glare,
The empty thing which charm'd thee there.
Be still content abroad to roam,
For Punch exhibits not at home.
The moral of the tale I sing
To modern matches home I bring
Ye youths, in quest of wives who go
To every crowded puppet-show;
If, from these scenes, you choose for life
A dancing, singing, dressing wife;
O marvel not at home to find
An empty figure, void of mind;
Stript of her scenery and garnish,
A thing of paint, and paste, and varnish.
Ye candidates for earth's best prize,
Domestic life's sweet charities!
If long you've stray'd from Reason's way,
Enslav'd by fashion's wizard sway;
If by her witcheries still betray'd,
You wed some vain fantastic maid;
Snatch'd, not *selected*, as you go,
The heroine of the puppet-show;
In every outward grace refin'd,
And destitute of nought but mind;
If skill'd in ev'ry polish'd art,
She wants simplicity of heart;
On her for bliss if you depend,
Without the means you seek the end
You seek, o'erturning nature's laws,
A consequence without a cause;
A downward pyramid you place,
The point inverted for the base.

Blame your own work, not fate; nor rail
If bliss so ill secur'd should fail.
'Tis after fancied good to roam,
'Tis bringing Punch to live at home.
And you, bright nymphs! who bless our eyes,
With all that art, that taste supplies;
Learn that accomplishments, at best,
Are but the garnish of life's feast;
And tho' your transient guests may praise
Your showy board on gala days:
Yet, while you treat each frippery sinner
With mere deserts, and call 'em dinner,
Your lord who *lives* at home, still feels
The want of more substantial meals;
Of sense and worth, which every hour
Enlarge Affection's growing power;
Of worth, not emulous to praise,
Of sense, not kept for gala days.
O! in the highest, happiest lot,
By woman be it ne'er forgot,
That human life's no Isthmian game,
Where sports and shows must purchase fame.
Tho' at the puppet-show he shone,
Punch was poor company alone.
Life is no round of jocund hours,
Of garlands gay, and festive bowers;
Even to the young, to whom I sing,
Its serious business life will bring.
Tho' bright the suns which now appear
To gild your cloudless atmosphere,
Oft, unawares, some direful storm,
Serenest skies may soon deform;
In dim Affliction's dreary hour
The flash of mirth must lose its power;
Whilst faith a constant light supplies,
And virtue cheers the darkest skies.
To bless the matrimonial hours
Must three joint leaders club their powers,
Good-nature, Piety, and Sense,
Must their confederate aids dispense.
As the soft powers of oil assuage
Of ocean's waves the furious rage;
Lull to repose the boiling tide,
And the rough billows bid subside;
Till every angry motion sleep,
And softest tremblings hush the deep:
Good-nature! thus thy charms controul
The tumults of the troubled soul:
By labour worn, by care oppress,
On thee the wearied head shall rest;
From business and distraction free,
Delighted, shall return to thee;
To thee the aching heart shall cling,
And find that peace it does not bring.
And while the light and empty fair,
Form'd for the ball-room's dazzling glare
Abroad, of speech, so prompt and rapid,
At home, so vacant and so vapid;
Of every puppet-show the life,
At home, a dull and tasteless wife;—
The mind with sense and knowledge stor'd
Can counsel, or can soothe its lord;
His varied joys or sorrows feel,
And share the pains it cannot heal.
But, *Piety!* without thy aid,
Love's fairest prospects soon must fade.
Blest architect! rear'd by thy hands,
Connubial Concord's temple stands.
Tho' Wit, tho' Genius, raise the pile,
Tho' Taste assist, tho' Talents smile,
Tho' Fashion, while her wreaths she twine,
Her light Corinthian columns join;
Still the frail structure Fancy rears,
A tottering house of cards appears;
Some sudden gust, nor rare the case,
May shake the building to its base,
Unless, bless'd Piety! thou join
Thy keystone to ensure the shrine;
Unless, to guard against surprises,
On thy broad arch the temple rises.

THE BAS BLEU; OR, CONVERSATION.

ADDRESSED TO MRS. VESEY

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following trifle owes it birth and name to the mistake of a foreigner of distinction who gave the literal appellation of the *Bas-bleu* to a small party of friends, who had been often called, by way of pleasantry, the *Blue Stockings*. These little societies have been sometimes misrepresented. They were composed of persons distinguished, in general for their rank, talents, or respectable character, who met frequently at Mrs. Vesey's, and at a few other houses, for the sole purpose of conversation, and were different in no respect from other parties, but that the company did not play at cards.

May the author be permitted to bear her grateful testimony (which will not be suspected of flattery, now that most of the persons named in this poem are gone down to the grave) to the many pleasant and instructive hours she had the honour to pass in this company; in which learning was as little disfigured by pedantry, good taste as little tinctured by affectation, and general conversation as little disgraced by calumny, levity, and the other censurable errors with which it is too commonly tainted, as has perhaps been known in any society.

Vesey! of verse the judge and friend!
Awhile my idle strain attend:
Not with the days of early Greece,
I mean to ope my slender piece;
The rare Symposium to proclaim
Which crown'd th' Athenian's social name;
Or how Aspasia's parties shone,
The first *Bas-bleu* at Athens known;
Where Socrates unbending sat,
With Alcibiades in chat;

And PERICLES vouchsafed to mix
Taste, wit, and mirth, with politics.
Nor need I stop my tale to show,
At least to readers such as you,
How all that Rome esteem'd polite,
Supp'd with LUCULLUS every night;
LUCULLUS, who, from Pontus come,
Brought conquests, and brought cherries home.
Name but the suppers in th' Apollo,
What classics images will follow!
How wit flew round, while each might take
Conchylia from the Lucrine lake;
And Attic salt; and Garum sauce,
And lettuce from the isle of Cos;
The first and last from Greece transplanted,
Us'd here—because the rhyme I wanted:
How pheasant's heads, with cost collected,
And phennicopters stood neglected.
To laugh at SCIPIO's lucky hit,
POMPEY's bon-mot, or CÆSAR's wit!
Intemperance, list'ning to the tale,
Forgot the mullet growing* stale;
And Admiration balanc'd, hung
'Twixt PEACOCKS' brains, and TULLY's tongue.
I shall not stop to dwell on these,
But be as epic as I please,
And plunge at once *in medias res*
To prove the privilege I plead,
I'll quote from Greek I cannot read;
Stunn'd by Authority, you yield,
And I, not Reason, keep the field.
Long was Society o'er-run
By Whist, that desolating Hun;
Long did Quadrille despotic sit,
That vandal of colloquial Wit:
And conversation's setting light
Lay half-obscur'd in Gothic night;
At length the mental shades decline,
Colloquial Wit begins to shine;
Genius prevails, and Conversation
Emerges into *Reformation.*
The vanquish'd triple crown to you,
BOSCAWEN sage, bright MONTAGU,
Divided, fell;—your cares in haste
Rescued the ravag'd realms of Taste;
And LYTTLETON's accomplished name,
And witty PULTNEY shar'd the fame;
The men, not bound by pedant rules,
Nor ladies† *Precieuses ridicules;*
For polish'd WALPOLE show'd the way,
How wits may be both learn'd and gay;
And CARTER taught the female train,
The deeply wise are never vain;
And she whom SHAKSPEARE's wrongs redrest,
Prov'd that the brightest are the best.
This just deduction still they drew,
And well they practis'd what they knew;
Nor taste, nor wit, deserves applause,
Unless still true to critic laws;
Good sense, of faculties the best,
Inspire and regulate the rest,
O! how unlike the wit that fell,
RAMBOUILLET!‡ at thy quaint hotel;
Where point, and turn, and equivoque
Distorted every word they spoke!
All so intolerably bright,
Plain Common Sense was put to flight;
Each speaker, so ingenious ever,
'Twas tiresome to be quite so clever;
There twisted Wit forgot to please,
And Mood and Figure banish'd ease;
No votive altar smok'd to thee,
Chaste queen, divine Simplicity!
But forc'd Conceit, which ever fails,
And stiff Antithesis prevails·
Uneasy Rivalry destroys
Society's unlaboured joys:
NATURE, of stilts and fetters tir'd,
Impatient from the wits retir'd,
Long time the exile, houseless stray'd
'Till SEVIGNE receiv'd the maid.
Though here she comes to bless our isle,
Not universal is her smile.
Muse! snatch the lyre which CAMBRIDGE strung
When he the *empty ball-room* sung;
'Tis tun'd above thy pitch, I doubt,
And thou no music would'st draw out;
Yet, in a lower note, presume
To sing the full dull drawing room.‡
Where the dire *circle* keeps its station,
Each common phrase is an oration;
And cracking fans, and whisp'ring misses,
Compose their conversation blisses.
The matron marks the goodly show,
While the tall daughter eyes the beau—]
The frigid beau! ah! luckless fair,
'Tis not for you that studied air;
Ah! not for you that sidelong glance,
And all that charming nonchalance;
Ah; not for you the three long hours
He worship'd the 'cosmetic powers;'
That finish'd head which breathes perfume,
And kills the nerves of half the room;
And all the murders meant to lie
In that large, languishing, gray eye;
Desist;—less wild th' attempt would be,
To warm the snows of Rhodope:
Too cold to feel, too proud to feign,
For him you're wise and fair in vain;
In vain to charm him you intend,
Self is his object, aim, and end.
Chill shade of that affected peer,
Who dreaded mirth, come safely here!
For here no vulgar joy effaces
Thy rage for polish, ton, and graces.
Cold Ceremony's leaden hand,
Waves o'er the room her poppy wand,
Arrives the stranger; every guest
Conspires to torture the distrest:
At once they rise—so have I seen—
You guess the similie I mean,
Take what comparison you please,
The crowded streets, the swarming bees,
The pebbles on the shore that lie,

* Seneca says, that in his time the Romans were arrived at such a pitch of luxury, that the mullet was reckoned stale which did not die in the hands of the guest.

† See *Moliere's* comedy.

‡ The society at the hotel de *Rambouillet*, though composed of the most polite and ingenious persons in France, was much tainted with affectation and false taste. See *Voiture*, *Menage*, &c,

The late earl of *Mansfield* told the author that when he was ambassador at Paris, he was assured that it had not been unusual for those persons of a purer taste who frequented these assemblies, to come out from their society so weary of wit and laboured ingenuity, that they used to express the comfort they felt in their emancipation, by saying, "*Allons! faisons des sottises!*"

* These grave and formal parties now scarcely exist, having been swallowed up in the reigning multitudinous assemblies.

The stars which form the galaxy;
These serve t' embellish what is said,
And show, besides, that one has read;—
At once they rise—th' astonish'd guest
Back in a corner slinks, distrest;
Scar'd at the many bowing round,
And shock'd at her own voice's sound,
Forgot the thing she meant to say,
Her words, half-uttered die away;
In sweet oblivion down she sinks,
And of her next appointment thinks.
While her loud neighbour on the right,
Boasts what she has to do to-night,
So very much, you'd swear her pride is
To match the labours of ALCIDES;
'Tis true, in hyperbolic measure,
She nobly calls her labours *Pleasure*
In this unlike ALCMENA's son,
She never means they should be done
Her fancy of no *limits* dreams,
No *ne plus ultra* stops her schemes;
Twelve! she'd have scorn'd the paltry round,
No pillars would have mark'd her bound;
CALPE and ABYLA, in vain
Had nodded cross th' opposing main;
A circumnavigator she
On Ton's illimitable sea.
We pass the pleasures vast and various,
Of routs, not social, but gregarious;
Where high heroic self-denial
Sustains her self-inflicted trial.
Day lab'rers! what an easy life,
To feed ten children and a wife!
No—I may juster pity spare
To the *night* lab'rer's keener care;
And, pleas'd, to gentler scenes retreat,
Where *Conversation* holds her seat.

Small were that art which would ensure
The circle's boasted quadrature!
See VESEY's* plastic genius make
A circle every figure take;
Nay, shapes and forms, which would defy
All science of Geometry;
Isosceles, and parallel,
Names, hard to speak, and hard to spell!
The enchantress wav'd her hand, and spoke!
Her potent wand the circle broke;
The social spirits hover round,
And bless the liberated ground.
Here, rigid CATO, awful sage!
Bold censor of a thoughtless age,
Once dealt his pointed moral round,
And, not unheeded, fell the sound;
The Muse his honour'd memory weeps,
For CATO now with ROSCIUS sleeps!
Here once HORTENSIUS† lov'd to sit,
Apostate now from social wit:
Ah! why in wrangling senates waste
The noblest parts, the happiest taste?
Why democratic thunders wield,
And quit the Muses' calmer field?
Ask you what charms this gift dispense?
'Tis the strong spell of COMMON SENSE.
Away dull Ceremony flew,
And with her bore Detraction too.

Nor only geometric art,
Does this presiding power impart;
But chymists too, who want the essence,
Which makes or mars all coalescence,
Of her the secret rare might get,
How different kinds amalgamate:
And he, who wilder studies chose,
Finds here a new metempsychose;
How forms can other forms assume,
Within her Pythagoric room;
Or be, and stranger is th' event,
The very things which Nature meant,
Nor strive by art and affectation.
To cross their genuine destination.
Here sober duchesses are seen,
Chaste wits, and critics void of spleen,
Physicians, fraught with real science,
And whigs and tories in alliance;
Poets, fulfilling Christian duties,
Just lawyers, reasonable beauties;
Bishops who preach, and peers who pay:
And countesses who seldom play;
Learn'd antiquaries, who from College,
Reject the rust, and bring the knowledge:
And, hear it, *Age*, believe it, *Youth*,—
Polemics, really seeking truth;
And travellers of that rare tribe,
Who've *seen* the countries they describe;
Who study'd there, so strange their plan,
Not plants, nor herbs alone, but man;
While travellers, of other notions,
Scale mountain tops, and traverse oceans,
As if so much these themes engross,
The study of mankind, was moss.
Ladies who point, nor think me partial,
An epigram as well as MARSHALL;
Yet in all female worth succeed,
As well as those who cannot read.

Right pleasant were the task, I ween,
To name the groups which fill the scene;
But rhymes of such fastidious nature,
She proudly scorns all nomenclature,
Nor grace our northern names her lips,
Like HOMER's catalogue of ships.

Once—faithful Memory! heave a sigh,
Here ROSCIUS gladdened every eye.
Why comes not Maro? Far from town,
He rears the urn to Taste, and BROWN,
Plants cypress round the tomb of GRAY,
Or decks his *English garden* gay;
Whose mingled sweets exhale perfume,
And promise a perennial bloom.
Taste thou the gentler joys they give,
With HORACE and with LELIUS live.

Hail, CONVERSATION, soothing power,
Sweet goddess of the social hour!
Not with more heartfelt warmth, at least,
Does LELIUS bend, thy true high priest;
Than I the lowest of thy train,
These field-flowers bring to deck thy fane;
Who to thy shrine like him can haste,
With warmer zeal, or purer taste?
O may thy worship long prevail,
And thy true votaries never fail!
Long may thy polish'd altars blaze
With wax-lights' undiminish'd rays!
Still be thy nightly offering paid,
Libations large of lemonade!
On silver vases, loaded, rise
The biscuits' ample sacrifice!

* This amiable lady was remarkable for her talent in breaking the formality of a circle, by inviting her parties to form themselves into little separate groups.

† This was written in the year 1787, when Mr. Edmund Burke had joined the then opposition.

Nor be the milk white streams forgot
Of thirst-assuaging, cool orgeat;
Rise, incense pure from fragrant tea,
Delicious incense, worthy thee!
Hail, Conversation, heav'nly fair,
Thou bliss of life, and balm of care!
Still may thy gentle reign extend,
And Taste with Wit and Science blend.
Soft polisher of rugged man!
Refiner of the social plan!
For thee, best solace of his toil!
The sage consumes his midnight oil!
And keeps late vigils, to produce
Materials for thy future use.
Calls forth the else neglected knowledge,
Of school, of travel, and of college.
If none behold, ah! wherefore fair?
Ah wherefore wise, if none must hear?
Our intellectual ore must shine,
Not slumber, idly, in the mine.
Let Education's moral mint
The noblest images imprint;
Let Taste her curious touchstone hold,
To try if standard be the gold;
But 'tis thy commerce Conversation,
Must give it use by circulation;
That noblest commerce of mankind,
Whose precious merchandise is MIND!
What stoic traveller would try
A sterile soil, and parching sky,
Or bear th' intemp'rate northern zone,
If what he saw must ne'er be known?
For this he bids his home farewell;
The joy of seeing is to tell.
Trust me, he never would have stirr'd,
Were he forbid to speak a word;
And Curiosity would sleep,
If her own secrets she must keep
The bliss of telling what is past
Becomes her rich reward at last.
Who mock'd at death, and danger smile,
To steal one peep at father Nile;
Who, at Palmyra risk his neck,
Or search the ruins of Balbeck;
If these must hide old Nilus' fount,
Nor Lybian tales at home recount;
If those must sink their learned labour,
Nor with their ruins treat a neighbour?
Range—study—think—do all we can,
Colloquial pleasures are for man.
Yet not from low desire to shine
Does Genius toil in Learning's mine;
Not to indulge in idle vision,
But strike new light by strong collision.
Of CONVERSATION, Wisdom's friend,
This is the object and the end,
Of moral truth man's proper science,
With sense and learning in alliance,
To search the depths, and thence produce
What tends to practice and to use.
And next in value we shall find
What mends the taste and forms the mind;
If high those truths in estimation,
Whose search is crown'd with demonstration;
To these assign no scanty praise,
Our taste which clears, our views which raise.
For grant the mathematic truth
Best balances the mind of youth;
Yet scarce the truth of Taste is found
To grow from principles less sound.

O'er books the mind inactive lies,
Books, the mind's food, not exercise!
Her vigorous wings she scarcely feels,
'Till use the latent strength reveals;
Her slumbering energies call'd forth,
She rises, conscious of her worth;
And, at her new-found powers elated,
Thinks them not rous'd, but new created.
Enlighten'd spirits! you, who know
What charms from polish'd converse flow,
Speak, for you can, the pure delight
When kindling sympathies unite;
When correspondent tastes impart
Communion sweet from heart to heart
You ne'er the cold gradations need
Which vulgar souls to union lead;
No dry discussion to unfold
The meaning caught ere well 'tis told:
In taste, in learning, wit, or science,
Still kindled souls demand alliance:
Each in the other joys to find
The image answering to his mind.
But sparks electric only strike
On souls electrical alike;
The flash of intellect expires,
Unless it meet congenial fires:
The language to th' elect alone
Is, like the mason's mystery known;
In vain th' unerring sign is made
To him who is not of the *trade*.
What lively pleasure to divine,
The thought implied, the hinted line,
To feel Allusion's artful force,
And trace the image to it's source!
Quick Memory blends her scatter'd rays,
'Till Fancy kindles at the blaze;
The works of ages start to view,
And ancient Wit elicits new.
But wit and parts if thus we praise,
What noble altars should we raise,
Those sacrifices could we see
Which Wit, O Virtue! makes to thee:
At once the rising thought to dash,
To quench at once the bursting flash!
The shining Mischief to subdue,
And lose the praise, and pleasure too!
Tho' Venus' self, could you detect her,
Imbuing with her richest nectar,
The thought unchaste—to check that thought,
To spurn a fame so dearly bought;
This is high Principle's controul!
This is true continence of soul!
Blush, heroes, at your cheap renown,
A vanquish'd realm, a plunder'd town!
Your conquests were to gain a name,
This conquest triumphs over fame;
So pure its essence, 'twere destroy'd
If known, and if commended, void.
Amidst the brightest truths believ'd
Amidst the fairest deeds achiev'd,
Shall stand recorded and admir'd,
That Virtue sunk what Wit inspir'd!
But let the letter'd and the fair,
And, chiefly, let the wit beware;
You, whose warm spirits never fail,
Forgive the hint which ends my tale.
O shun the perils which attend
On wit, on warmth, and heed your friends;
Tho' Science nurs'd you in her bowers,
Tho' Fancy crown your brow with flowers,

Each thought, tho' bright Invention fill,
Tho' Attic bees each word distil;
Yet, if one gracious power refuse
Her gentle influence to infuse;
If she withhold her magic spell,
Nor in the social circle dwell;
In vain shall listening crowds approve,
They'll praise you, but they will not love.
What is this power, you're loth to mention,
This charm, this witchcraft? 'tis Attention:
Mute angel, yes; thy look dispense
The silence of intelligence;
Thy graceful form I well discern,
In act to listen and to learn,
'Tis thou for talents shalt obtain
That pardon Wit would hope in vain;
Thy wond'rous power, thy secret charm,
Shall Envy of her sting disarm;
Thy silent flattery soothes our spirit,
And we forgive eclipsing merit;
Our jealous souls no longer burn,
Nor hate thee, tho' thou shine in turn,
The sweet atonement screens the fault,
And love and praise are cheaply bought.
With mild complaceney to hear,
Tho' somewhat long the tale appear,—
The dull relation to attend,
Which mars the story you could mend;
'Tis more than wit, 'tis moral beauty,
'Tis pleasure rising out of duty.
Nor vainly think, the time you waste,
When temper triumphs over taste.

BISHOP BONNER'S GHOST.

This little poem was never before published. A few copies were printed by the late earl of Orford at his press at Strawberry-hill, and given to a few particular friends.

THE ARGUMENT.

In the gardens of the palace of Fulham is a dark recess; at the end of this stands a chair, which once belonged to bishop Bonner.—A certain bishop of London, more than two hundred years after the death of the aforesaid Bonner. one morning just as the clock of the Gothic chapel had struck six, undertook to cut with his own hand a narrow walk through this thicket, which is since called the *Monk's-walk*. He had no sooner begun to clear the way, than lo! suddenly up-started from the chair the ghost of bishop Bonner, who, in a tone of just and bitter indignation, uttered the following verses.

Reformer, hold! ah, spare my shade,
Respect the hallow'd dead!
Vain pray'r! I see the op'ning glade,
See utter darkness fled.
Just so your innovating hand
Let in the moral light;
So, chas'd from this bewilder'd land,
Fled intellectual night.
Where now that holy gloom which hid
Fair Truth from vulgar ken?
Where now that wisdom which forbid
To think that monks were men?
The tangled mazes of the schools,
Which spread so thick before;
Which knaves entwin'd to puzzle fools,
Shall catch mankind no more.
Those charming intricacies where?
Those venerable lies?
Those legends, once the church's care?
Those sweet perplexities?
Ah! fatal age, whose sons combin'd
Of credit to exhaust us:
Ah! fatal age, which gave mankind
A Luther and a Faustus!*
Had only Jack and Martin† liv'd,
Our pow'r had slowly fled;
Our influence longer had surviv'd,
Had layman never read.

For knowledge flew, like magic spell,
By typographic art;
Oh, shame! a peasant now can tell
If priests the truth impart.
Ye councils, pilgrimages, creeds
Synods, decrees, and rules!
Ye warrants of unholy deeds,
Indulgences and bulls!
Where are ye now? and where, alas?
The pardons we dispense!
And penances, the sponge of sins;
And Peter's holy pence?
Where now the beads that used to swell
Lean Virtue's spare amount?
Here only faith and goodness fill
A heretic's account.
But soft—what gracious form appears
Is this a convent's life!
Atrocious sight! by all my fears,
A prelate with a wife!
Ah! sainted Mary,* not for this
Our pious labour's join'd;
The witcheries of domestic bliss
Had shook ev'n Gardner's mind,
Hence all the sinful, human ties,
Which mar the cloister's plan;
Hence all the weak fond charities,
Which makes man feel for man.
But tortur'd Memory vainly speaks
The projects we design'd;

* The same age which brought heresy into the church, unhappily introduced printing among the arts, by which means the Scriptures were unluckily disseminated among the vulgar.

† How bishop *Bonner* came to have read *Swift's* Tale of a Tub it may now be in vain to inquire.

* An orthodox queen of the sixteenth century, who laboured with might and main, conjointly with these two venerable bishops to extinguish a dangerous heresy yeleped the Reformation.

While this apostate bishop seeks
The freedom of mankind.
Oh, born in ev'ry thing to shake
The systems plann'd by me!
So heterodox, that he would make
Both soul and body free.
Nor clime nor colour stay his hand;
With charity deprav'd,
He would from Thames to Gambia's strand,
Have all be free and sav'd.
And who shall change his wayward heart
His wilful spirit turn?
For those his labours can't convert,
His weakness will not burn.

A GOOD OLD PAPIST.

Ann. Dom. 1900.

*** By the lapse of time the three last stanzas are become unintelligible. Old chronicles say, that towards the latter end of the 18th century, a bill was brought into the British parliament, by an active young reformer, for the abolition of a pretended traffic of the human species. But this only shows how little faith is to be given to the exaggerations of history; for as no vestige of this incredible trade now remains, we look upon the whole story to have been one of those fictions, not uncommon among authors, to blacken the memory of former ages.

FLORIO.

A TALE FOR FINE GENTLEMEN AND FINE LADIES.

IN TWO PARTS.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.*

My Dear Sir,——It would be very flattering to me, if I might hope that the little tale, which I now take the liberty of presenting to you, could amuse a few moments of your tedious indisposition. It is, I confess, but a paltry return for the many hours of agreeable information and elegant amusement which I have received from your spirited and very entertaining writings: yet I am persuaded, that you will receive it with favour, as a small offering of esteem and gratitude; as an offering of which the intention alone makes all the little value.

The slight verses, sir, which I place under your protection, will not, I fear, impress the world with a very favourable idea of my poetical powers; But I shall, at least, be suspected of having some taste, and of keeping good company, when I confess that some of the pleasantest hours of my life have been passed in your conversation. I should be unjust to your very engaging and well-bred turn of wit, if I did not declare that, among all the lively and brilliant things I have heard from you, I do not remember ever to have heard an unkind or an ungenerous one. Let me be allowed to bear my feeble testimony to your temperate use of this charming faculty, so delightful in itself, but which can only be safely trusted in such hands as yours, where it is guarded by politeness, and directed by humanity.

I have the honour to be, sir, your much obliged,
and most obedient, humble servant,

January, 27, 1786. THE AUTHOR.

* Afterwards Earl of Orford.

PART I.

Florio, a youth of gay renown,
Who figur'd much about the town,
Had pass'd, with general approbation,
The modish forms of education;
Knew what was proper to be known,
Th' establish'd jargon of bon-ton;
Had learnt, with very moderate reading,
The whole new system of good breeding:
He studied to be bold and rude.
Tho' native feeling would intrude:
Unlucky sense and sympathy,
Spoilt the vain thing he strove to be.
For Florio was not meant by nature,
A silly or a worthless creature:
He had a heart dispos'd to feel,
Had life and spirit taste and zeal;
Was handsome, generous; but by fate,
Predestin'd to a large estate!
Hence, all that grac'd his op'ning days,
Was marr'd by pleasure, spoilt by praise.

The Destiny, who wove the thread
Of Florio's being, sigh'd, and said,
'Poor youth! this cumbrous twist of gold,
More than my shuttle well can hold,
For which thy anxious father toil'd,
Thy white and even thread has spoil'd:
'Tis this shall warp thy pliant youth
From sense, simplicity and truth,
Thy erring fire, by wealth mislead,
Shall scatter pleasures round thy head,
When wholesome discipline's controul,
Should brace the sinews of thy soul;
Coldly thou'lt toil for Learning's prize,
For why should he that's rich be wise?
The gracious Master of mankind,
Who knew us vain, corrupt and blind,
In mercy, tho' in anger said,
That man should earn his daily bread
His lot, inaction renders worse,
While labour mitigates the curse.

The idle, life's worst burthens bear,
And meet, what toil escapes, despair!
Forgive, nor lay the fault on me,
This mixture of mythology;
The muse of Paradise has deign'd
With truth to mingle fables feign'd;
And tho' the bard, who would attain
The glories, MILTON, of thy strain,
Will never reach thy style or thoughts,
He may be like thee in thy faults!
Exhausted FLORIO, at the age,
When youth should rush on glory's stage;
When life should open fresh and new,
And ardent Hope her schemes pursue;
Of youthful gaiety bereft,
Had scarce an unbroach'd pleasure left;
He found already to his cost,
The shining gloss of life was lost;
And Pleasure was so coy a prude,
She fled the more, the more pursu'd;
Or if, o'ertaken and caress'd,
He loath'd and left her when possess'd.
But FLORIO knew the world that science
Sets sense and learning at defiance;
He thought the world to him was known,
Whereas he only knew the town;
In men this blunder still you find,
All think their little set—mankind.
Tho' high renown the youth had gain'd,
No flagrant crimes his life had stain'd,
No tool of falsehood, slave of passion,
But spoilt by CUSTOM, and the FASHION.
Tho' known among *a certain set*,
He did not like to be in debt;
He shudder'd at the dicer's box,
Nor thought it very heterodox,
That tradesmen should be sometimes paid,
And bargains kept as well as made.
His growing credit as a sinner,
Was that he lik'd to spoil a dinner;
Made pleasure and made business wait,
And still, by system, came too late;
Yet, 'twas a hopeful indication,
On which to forund a reputation;
Small habits well pursu'd betimes,
May reach the dignity of crimes.
And who a juster claim preferr'd,
Than one who always broke his word!
His mornings were not spent in vice,
'Twas lounging, sauntering, eating ice:
Walk up and down St. James's-street,
Full fifty times the youth you'd meet:
He hated cards, detested drinking,
But stroll'd to shun the toil of thinking;
'Twas doing nothing was his curse,
Is there a vice can plague us worse?
The wretch who digs the mine for bread,
Or ploughs, that others may be fed,
Feels less fatigued than that decreed
To him who cannot think, or read.
Not all the peril of temptations,
Not all the conflict of the passions,
Can quench the spark of glory's flame,
Or quite extinguish virtue's name;
Like the true taste for genuine saunter,
Like sloth, the soul's most dire enchanter.
The active fires that stir the breast,
Her poppies charm to fatal rest,
They rule in short and quick succession,
But SLOTH keeps one long, fast possession;
Ambition's reign is quickly clos'd,
Th' usurper rage is soon depos'd;
Intemperance, where there's no temptation,
Makes voluntary abdication;
Of other tyrants short the strife,
But INDOLENCE is king for life.
The despot twists with soft control,
Eternal fetters round the soul.
Yet tho' so polish'd FLORIO's breeding,
Think him not ignorant of reading;
For he to keep him from the vapours,
Subscrib'd at HOOKHAM's, saw the papers
Was deep in poet's corner wit;
Knew what was in italics writ;
Explain'd fictitious names at will,
Each gutted syllable could fill;
There oft, in paragraphs, his name
Gave symptom sweet of growing fame;
Tho' yet they only serv'd to hint
That FLORIO lov'd to see in print,
His ample buckles' alter'd shape,
His buttons chang'd, his varying cape.
And many a standard phrase was his
Might rival *bore*, or banish *quiz;*
The man who grasps this young renown,
And early starts for Fashion's crown;
In time that glorious prize may wield,
Which clubs, and ev'n Newmarket yield.
He studied while he dress'd, for true 'tis,
He read *compendiums*, *extracts*, *beauties*,
Abreges, *dictionaries*, *recueils*,
Mercures, *journaux*, *extracts*, and *feuilles*,
No work in substance now is follow'd,
The chemic extract only's swallow'd.
He lik'd those literary cooks
Who skim the cream of other's books,
And ruin half an author's graces,
By plucking bon-mots from their places:
He wonders any writing sells,
But these spic'd mushrooms and morells
His palate these alone can touch,
Where every mouthful is *bonne bouche.*
Some phrase, that with the public took,
Was all he read of any book;
For plan, detail, arrangement, system,
He let *them* go, and never miss'd 'em.
Of each new play he saw a part,
And all the *anas* had by heart;
He found whatever they produce
Is fit for conversation-use;
Learning so ready for display,
A page would prime him for a day;
They cram not with a mass of knowledge,
With smacks of toil, and smells of college,
Which in the memory useless lies,
Or only makes men—good and wise.
This might have merit once indeed,
But now for other ends we read.
A friend he had, BELLARIO hight,
A reasoning, reading, learned wight;
At least, with men of FLORIO's breeding.
He was a prodigy of reading.
He knew each stale and vapid lie
In tomes of French philosophy;
And then, we fairly may presume,
From PYRRHO down to DAVID HUME,
'Twere difficult to single out
A man more full of shallow doubt;
He knew the little sceptic prattle,
The sophist's paltry arts of battle.

Talk'd gravely of th' Atomic dance,
Of moral fitness, fate, and chance;
Admir'd the system of LUCRETIUS,
Whose matchless verse makes nonsense specious!
To this his doctrine owes its merits,
Like pois'nous reptiles kept in spirits.
Tho' sceptics dull his scheme rehearse,
Who have not souls to taste his verse.
BELLARIO founds his reputation
On dry stale jokes, about creation;
Would prove, by argument circuitous,
The combination was fortuitous.
Swore priests' whole trade was to deceive,
And prey on bigots who believe;
With bitter ridicule could jeer,
And had the true free-thinking sneer.
Grave arguments he had in store,
Which have been answer'd o'er and o'er;
And us'd, with wond'rous penetration
The trite, old trick of false citation;
From ancient authors fond to quote
A phrase or thought they never wrote.
Upon his highest shelf there stood
The classics neatly cut in wood;
And in a more commodious station,
You found them in a French translation:
He swears, 'tis from the Greek he quotes,
But keeps the French—just for the notes.
He worshipp'd certain modern names
Who history write in epigrams,
In pointed periods, shining phrases,
And all the small poetic daisies,
Which crowd the pert and florid style,
Where fact is dropt to raise a smile;
Where notes indecent or profane
Serve to *raise* doubts, but not *explain:*
Where all is spangle, glitter, show,
And truth is overlaid below:
Arts scorn'd by History's sober muse,
Arts CLARENDON disdain'd to use.
Whate'er the subject of debate,
'Twas larded still with sceptic prate;
Begin whatever theme you will,
In unbelief he lands you still;
The good, with shame I speak it, feel
Not half this proselyting zeal:
While cold their master's cause to own
Content to go to heaven alone;
The infidel in liberal trim,
Would carry all the world with him:
Would treat his wife, friend, kindred, nation,
Mankind—with what! Annihilation.
Tho' FLORIO did not quite believe him,
He thought, why should a friend deceive him?
Much as he priz'd BELLARIO's wit,
He liked not all his notions yet;
He thought him charming, pleasant, odd,
But hop'd one might believe in God;
Yet such the charms that grac'd his tongue,
He knew not how to think him wrong.
Tho' FLORIO tried a thousand ways,
Truth's insuppressive torch would blaze;
Where once her flame has burnt, I doubt
If ever it go fairly out.
Yet, under great BELLARIO's care,
He gain'd each day a better air;
With many a leader of renown,
Deep in the learning of the town,
Who never other science knew,
But what from that prime source they drew;
Pleas'd, to the opera they repair,
To get recruits of knowledge there;
Mythology gain at a glance,
And learn the classics from a dance:
In OVID they ne'er car'd a groat,
How far'd the vent'rous ARGONAUT;
Yet charm'd they see MEDEA rise
On fiery dragons to the skies.
For DIDO,* tho' they never knew her
As MARO's magic pencil drew her,
Faithful and fond, and broken-hearted,
Her pious vagabond departed;
Yet, for DIDONE how they roar
And *Cara! Cara!* loud encore.
One taste, BELLARIO's soul possess'd
The master passion of his breast;
It was not one of those frail joys,
Which, by possession, quickly cloys
This bliss was solid, constant, true,
'Twas action, and 'twas passion too
For tho' the business might be finish'd,
The pleasure scarcely was diminish'd;
Did he ride out, or sit, or walk,
He liv'd it o'er again in talk;
Prolong'd the fugitive delight,
In words by day, in dreams by night,
'Twas *eating* did his soul allure,
A deep, keen, modish epicure;
Tho' once this name, as I opine,
Meant not such men as live to dine;
Yet all our modern wits assure us,
That's all *they* know of EPICURUS:
They fondly fancy, that repletion
Was the *chief good* of that fam'd Grecian.
To live in gardens full of flowers,
And talk Philosophy in bowers,
Or, in the covert of a wood,
To descant on the *sovereign good*,
Might be the notion of their founder,
But they have notions vastly sounder;
Their bolder standards they erect,
To form a more substantial sect;
Old EPICURUS would not own 'em,
A dinner is *their summum bonum.*
More like you'll find such sparks as these,
To EPICURUS' deities;
Like them they mix not with affairs,
But loll and laugh at human cares.
To beaux this difference is allow'd,
They choose a sofa for a cloud;
BELLARIO had embrac'd with glee,
This practical philosophy.
Young FLORIO's father had a friend,
And ne'er did heaven a worthier send;
A cheerful knight of good estate,
Whose heart was warm, whose bounty great.
Where'er his wide protection spread,
The sick were cheer'd, the hungry fed;
Resentment vanish'd where he came;
And lawsuits fled before his name;
The old esteem'd, the young caress'd him,
And all the smiling village bless'd him,
Within his castle's Gothic gate,
Sat Plenty, and old-fashioned state:
Scarce Prudence could his bounties stint;—
Such characters are out of print;
O! would kind heav'n, the age to mend,

* *Medea* and *Dido* were the two reigning operas at this time.

A new edition of them send,
Before our tottering castles fall,
And swarming nabobs seize on all!
Some little whims he had, 'tis true,
But they were harmless, and were few;
He dreaded nought like alteration,
Improvement still was innovation;
He said, when any change was brewing,
Reform was a fine name for ruin;'*
This maxim firmly he would hold,
'*That* always must be good that's old.'
The acts which dignify the day
He thought portended its decay:
And fear'd twould show a falling state,
If STERNHOLD should give way to TATE.
The church's downfall he predicted,
Were modern tunes not interdicted;
He scorn'd them all, but crown'd with palm
The man who set the hundredth psalm.
Of moderate parts, of moderate wit,
But parts for life and business fit:
Whate'er the theme; he did not fail,
At popery and the French to rail;
And started wide, with fond digression
To praise the protestant succession.
Of BLACKSTONE he had read a part,
And all BURN'S JUSTICE knew by heart.
He thought man's life too short to waste
On idle things call'd wit and taste.
In books that he might lose no minute,
His very verse had business in it.
He ne'er had heard of bards of GREECE,
But had read half of DYER'S FLEECE.
His sphere of knowledge still was wider,
His Georgics, 'PHILIPS upon cider:'
He could produce in proper place,
Three apt quotations from the 'Chase,'†
And in the hall, from day to day,
Old ISAAC WALTON'S *Angler* lay.
This good and venerable knight
One daughter had, his soul's delight:
For face no mortal could resist her,
She smil'd like HEBE'S youngest sister;
Her life, as lovely as her face,
Each duty mark'd with every grace;
Her native sense improv'd by reading,
Her native sweetness by good-breeding:
She had perus'd each choicer sage
Of ancient date, or later age;
But her best knowledge still she found
On sacred, not on classic ground;
'Twas thence her noblest stores she drew,
And well she practis'd what she knew.
Led by Simplicity divine,
She pleas'd, and never tried to shine;
She gave to chance each unschool'd feature,
And left her cause to sense and nature.
The sire of FLORIO, ere he died,
Decreed fair CELIA FLORIO'S bride
Bade him his latest wish attend,
And win the daughter of his friend:
When the last rites to him were paid,
He charg'd him to address the maid:
Sir GILBERT'S heart the wish approv'd
For much his ancient friend he lov'd.
Six rapid months like lightning fly,
And the last gray was now thrown by;
FLORIO reluctant, calls to mind
The orders of a sire too kind:
Yet go he must; he must fulfil
The hard conditions of the will:
Go, at that precious hour of prime,
Go, at that swarming, bustling time,
When the full town to joy invites,
Distracted with its own delights;
When Pleasure pours from her full urn,
Each tiresome transport in its turn;
When Dissipation's altars blaze,
And men run mad a thousand ways;
When, on his tablets, there were found
Engagements for full six weeks round;
Must leave, with grief and desperation,
Three packs of cards of invitation,
And all the ravishing delights
Of slavish days, and sleepless nights.
Ye nymphs, whom tyrant Power drags down,
With hand despotic from the town,
When ALMACK'S doors wide open stand,
And the gay partner's offer'd hand
Courts to the dance; when steaming rooms,
Fetid with ungents and perfumes,
Invite you to the mobs polite
Of three sure balls in one short night
You may conceive what FLORIO felt,
And sympathetically melt;
You may conceive the hardship dire
To lawns and woodlands to retire,
When, freed from Winter's icy chain,
Glad Nature revels on the plain;
When blushing Spring leads on the Hours,
And May is prodigal of flow'rs;
When Fashion warbles thro' the grove,
And all is song, and all is love;
When new-born breezes sweep the vale,
And Health adds fragrance to the gale.

PART II.

SIX bays unconscious of their weight,
Soon lodg'd him at Sir GILBERT'S gate:
His trusty Swiss, who flew still faster,
Announc'd th' arrival of his master:
So loud the rap which shook the door,
The hall re-echo'd to the roar;
Since first the castle walls were rear'd
So dread a sound had ne'er been heard;
The din alarm'd the frighten'd deer,
Who in a corner slunk for fear,
The butler thought 'twas beat of drum,
The steward swore the French were come;
It ting'd with red poor FLORIO'S face,
He thought himself in Portland-place.
Short joy! he enter'd, and the gate
Clos'd on him with its ponderous weight.
Who, like Sir GILBERT, now was blest?
With rapture he embrac'd his guest.
Fair CELIA blush'd, and FLORIO utter'd
Half sentences, or rather mutter'd
Disjointed words—as, 'honour! pleasure.
'Kind!—vastly good, ma'am!—beyond measure:
Tame expletives, with which dull fashion
Fills vacancies of sense and passion.
Yet, tho' disciple of cold art,
FLORIO soon found he had a heart;

* These lines were written many years before the French revolution had in a manner realized Sir *Gilbert's* idea of *reform*.

† A poem by Mr. Somerville.

He saw; and but that admiration
Had been too active, too like passion;
Or had he been to *Ton* less true,
Cupid had shot him thro' and thro';
But, vainly speeds the surest dart,
Where Fashion's mail defends the heart;
The shaft her cold repulsion found,
And fell without the pow'r to wound:
For Fashion, with a mother's joy,
Dipp'd in her lake the darling boy;
That lake, whose chilling waves impart
The gift to freeze the warmest heart:
Yet guarded as he was with phlegm,
With such delight he ey'd the dame,
Found his cold heart to melt before her,
And felt so ready to adore her;
That Fashion fear'd her son would yield,
And flew to snatch him from the field;
O'er his touch'd heart her ægis threw,
The goddess mother straight he knew;
Her power he own'd, she saw and smil'd,
And claim'd the triumph of her child.

Celia a table still supplied,
Which modish luxury might deride:
A modest feast the hope conveys,
The master eats on other days;
While gorgeous banquets oft bespeak
A hungry household all the week.
A decent elegance was there,
And Plenty with her liberal air.
But vulgar Plenty gave offence,
And shock'd poor Florio's nicer sense;
Patient he yielded to his fate,
When good Sir Gilbert pil'd his plate;
He bow'd snbmissive, made no question,
But that 'twas sovereign for digestion;
But, such was his unlucky whim,
Plain meats would ne'er agree with him;
Yet feign'd to praise the Gothic treat,
And, if he ate not, seem'd to eat.

In sleep sad Florio hop'd to find,
The pleasures he had left behind.
He dreamt, and lo! to charm his eyes,
The form of Weltje* seem'd to rise;
The gracious vision wav'd his wand,
And banquets sprung to Florio's hand;
Th' imaginary savours rose
In tempting odours to his nose.
A bell, not Fancy's false creation,
Gives joyful 'note of preparation:'
He starts, he wakes, the bell he hears;
Alas! it rings for morning pray'rs.

But how to spend next tedious morning,
Was past his possible discerning;
Uuable to amuse himself,
He tumbled every well-ranged shelf;
This book was dull, and that was wise,
And this was monstrous as to size,
With eager joy he gobbled down
Whate'er related to the town;
Whate'er look'd small, whate'er look'd new
Half-bound, or stitch'd in pink or blue;
Old play-bills, Astley's last year's feats,
And Opera disputes in sheets.
As these dear records meet his eyes,
Ghosts of departed pleasures rise;
He lays the book upon the shelf,
And leaves the day to spend itself.

To cheat the tedious hours, whene'er
He sallied forth to take the air,
His sympathetic ponies knew
Which way their lord's affections drew,
And, every time he went abroad,
Sought of themselves the London road;
He ask'd each mile of every clown,
How far they reckon'd it to town?
And still his nimble spirits rise,
Whilst thither he directs his eyes;
But when his coursers back he guides
The sinking mercury quick subsides.

A week he had resolv'd to stay
But found a week in every day;
Yet if the gentle maid was by,
Faint pleasure glisten'd in his eye;
Whene'er she spoke, attention hung
On the mild accents of her tongue;
But when no more the room she grac'd,
The slight impression was effac'd.
Whene'er Sir Gilbert's sporting guests
Retail'd old news, or older jests,
Florio, quite calm, and debonair,
Still humm'd a new Italian air;
He did not even feign to hear 'em,
But plainly show'd he could not bear 'em.

Celia perceived his secret thoughts,
But like the youth with all his faults;
Yet 'twas unlike, she softly said,
The tales ot love which she had read,
Where heroes vow'd, and sigh'd, and knelt;
Nay, 'twas unlike the love she felt;
Tho' when her sire the youth would blame,
She clear'd his but suspected fame,
Ventur'd to hope, with fault'ring tongue,
'He would reform—he was but young;'
Confess'd his manners wrong in part,
'But then—he had so good a heart!'
She sunk each fault, each virtue rais'd,
And still where truth permitted, prais'd;
His interest farther to secure,
She prais'd his bounty to the poor
For, votary as he was of art,
He had a kind and melting heart;
Tho', with a smile, he us'd to own
He had no *time* to feel in town;
Not that he blush'd to show compassion,—
It chanc'd that year to be the fashion.
And equally the modish tribe,
To clubs or hospitals subscribe.

At length, to wake ambition's flame,
A letter from Bellario came;
Announcing the supreme delight,
Preparing for a certain night,
By Flavia fair, return'd from France,
Who took him captive at a glance:
The invitations all were given!
Five hundred cards!—a little heaven!
A dinner first—he would present him,
And nothing, nothing must prevent him,
Whoever wish'd a noble air,
Must gain it by an *entree* there;
Of all the glories of the town,
'Twas the first passport to renown,
Then ridicul'd his rural schemes,
His pastoral shades, and purling streams;
Sneer'd at his present *brilliant* life,
His polish'd sire, and high-bred wife
Thus, doubly to inflame, he tried,
His curiosity and pride.

The youth, with agitated heart,

* A celebrated cook and confectioner.

Prepar'd directly to depart;
But, bound in honour to obey
His father at no distant day;
He promis'd soon to hasten down,
Tho' business call'd him now to town;
Then faintly hints a cold proposal—
But leaves it to the knight's disposal—
Stammer'd half words of love and duty,
And mutter'd much of—'worth and beauty;'
Something of passion then he dropt,
'And hop'd his *ardour*'—Here he stopt;
For some remains of native truth
Flush'd in his face, and check'd the youth;
Yet still th' ambiguous suffusion,
Might pass for artless love's confusion.
The doating father thought 'twas strange,
But fancied men like times might change;
Yet own'd, nor could he check his tongue,
It was not so when he was young.
That was the reign of love he swore,
Whose halcyon days are now no more.
In that blest age, for honour fam'd,
Love paid the homage Virtue claim'd;
Not that insipid, daudling Cupid,
With heart so hard, and air so stupid,
Who coldly courts the charms which lie
In Affectation's half-clos'd eye.
Love then was honest, genuine passion,
And manly gallantry the fashion;
Yet pure as ardent was the flame
Excited by the beauteous dame;
Hope could subsist on slender bounties,
And suitors gallop'd o'er two counties,
The ball's fair partner to behold,
Or humbly hope—she caught no cold.
But mark how much Love's annals mend.
Should beauty's goddess now descend;
On some adventure should she come,
To grace a modish drawing-room;
Spite of her form and heavenly air,
What beau would hand her to a chair?
Vain were that grace, which to her son,
Disclos'd what Beauty had not done:
Vain were that motion which betray'd,
The goddess was no earth-born maid;
If noxious Faro's baleful spright,
With rites infernal rul'd the night,
The group absorb'd in play and pelf,
Venus might call her doves herself.
As Florio pass'd the castle-gate,
His spirits seem to lose their weight;
He feasts his lately vacant mind
With all the joys he hopes to find;
Yet on whate'er his fancy broods,
The form of Celia still intrudes;
Whatever other sound he hears,
The voice of Celia fills his ears;
Howe'er his random thoughts might fly,
Her graces dance before his eye;
Nor was the obtrusive vision o'er,
E'en when he reach'd Bellario's door.
The friends embrac'd with warm delight,
And Flavia's praises crown'd the night.
Soon dawn'd the day which was to shew,
Glad Florio what was heaven below.
Flavia, admir'd wherever known,
Th' acknowledg'd empress of bon-ton;
O'er Fashion's wayward kingdom reigns,
And holds Bellario in her chains;
Various her powers; a wit by day,
By night unmatch'd for lucky play.
The flattering, fashionable tribe,
Each stray bon-mot to her ascribe;
And all her 'little senate' own
She made the best *charade* in town;
Her midnight suppers always drew
Whate'er was fine, whate'er was new;
There oft the brightest fame you'd see
The victim of a repartee;
For Slander's priestess still supplies
The spotless for the sacrifice.
None at her polish'd table sit,
But who aspire to modish wit,
The *persiflage*, th' unfeeling jeer,
The civil, grave, ironic sneer;
The laugh which more than censure wounds,
Which, more than argument, confounds.
There the fair deed, which would engage
The wonder of a nobler age,
With unbelieving scorn is heard,
Or still to selfish ends refer'd;
If in the deed no flaw they find,
To some base motive 'tis assign'd
When Malice longs to throw her dart,
But finds no vulnerable part,
Because the Virtues all defend,
At every pass, their guarded friend;
Then by one slight insinuation,
One scarce perceiv'd exaggeration;
Sly Ridicule, with half a word,
Can fix her stigma of—absurd;
Nor care, nor skill, extracts the dart,
With which she stabs the feeling heart;
Her cruel caustics inly pain,
And scars indelible remain.
Supreme in wit, supreme in play,
Despotic Flavia all obey;
Small were her natural charms of face,
Till heighten'd with each foreign grace;
But what subdued Bellario's soul
Beyond Philosophy's control,
Her constant table was as fine
As if ten rajahs were to dine;
She every day produc'd such fish as
Would gratify the nice Apicius,
Or realize what we think fabulous
I' th' bill of fare of Heliogabalus.
Yet still the natural taste was cheated,
'Twas deluged in some sauce one hated.
'Twas sauce! 'twas sweetmeat! 'twas confection!
All poignancy! and all perfection!
Rich *entremets*, whose name none knows,
Ragouts, *tourtes*, *tendrons*, *fricandeux*,
O' th' hogs of Epicurus' sty;
Yet all so foreign and so fine,
'Twas easier to admire, than dine.
O! if the muse had power to tell
Each dish, no muse has power to spell
Great goddess of the French *Cuisine!*
Not with unhallow'd hands I mean
To violate thy secret shade,
Which eyes profane shall ne'er invade;
No! of thy dignity supreme,
I, with 'mysterious reverence,' deem!
Or, should I venture with rash hand,
The vulgar would not understand;
None but th' initiated know
The raptures keen thy rights bestow.
Thus much to tell I lawful deem,
Thy works are never what they seem;

Thy will this general law has past,
That nothing of itself shall taste.
Thy word this high decree enacted,
'In all be nature counteracted!'
Conceive, who can, the perfect bliss,
For 'tis not given to all who guess,
The rapturous joy BELLARIO found,
When thus his ev'ry wish was crown'd.
To FLORIO, as the best of friends,
One dish he secretly commends
Then hinted, as a special favour,
What gave it that delicious flavour;
A mystery he so much reveres,
He never to unhallow'd ears
Would trust it, but to him would show
How far true friendship's power would go.
FLORIO, tho' dazzled by the *fete*,
With far inferior transport eat;
A little warp his taste had gain'd,
Which, unperceived, till now remain'd;
For, from himself he would conceal
The change he did not choose to feel;
He almost wish'd he could be picking
An unsophisticated chicken;
And when he cast his eyes around,
And not one simple morsel found,
O give me, was his secret wish,
My charming CELIA's plainest dish!
Thus Nature, struggling for her rights,
Lets in some little, casual lights:
And Love combines to war with Fashion,
Tho' yet 'twas but an infant passion;
The practis'd FLAVIA tried each art
Of sly attack to steal his heart;
Her forc'd civilities oppress,
Fatiguing thro' mere graciousness:
While many a gay intrepid dame,
By bold assault essay'd the same.
Fill'd with disgust, he strove to fly
The artful glance and fearless eye;
Their jargon now no more he praises,
Nor echoes back their flimsy phrases.
He felt not CELIA's powers of face,
Till weigh'd against *bon-ton* grimace;
Nor half her genuine beauties tasted,
'Till with factitious charms contrasted;
Th' industrious carpies hover'd round,
Nor peace nor liberty he found!
By force and flattery circumvented,
To play, reluctant, he consented;
Each dame her power of pleasing tried,
To fix the novice by her side,
Of *pigeons* he the very best,
Who wealth with ignorance possest.
But FLAVIA's rhetoric best persuades,
That sybil leads him to the shades;
The fatal leaves around the room,
Prophetic tell the approaching doom!
Yet, different from the tale of old,
It was the fair one pluck'd the gold;
Her arts the pond'rous purse exhaust;
A thousand borrow'd, stak'd, and lost,
Wakes him to sense and shame again,
Nor force, nor fraud could more obtain.
He rose, indignant, to attend
The summons of a ruin'd friend,
Whom keen BELLARIO's arts betray
To all the depths of desperate play;
A thoughtless youth who near him sat,
Was plunder'd of his whole estate;
Too late he call'd for FLORIO's aid,
A beggar in a moment made.
And now, with horror, FLORIO views
The wild confusion which ensues;
Marks how the dames, of late so fair,
Assume a fierce demoniac air;
Marks where the infernal furies hold
Their orgies foul o'er heaps of gold;
And spirits dire appear to rise,
Guarding the horrid mysteries;
Marks how deforming passions tear
The bosoms of the losing fair;
How looks convuls'd, and haggard faces,
Chase the scar'd Loves, and frighten'd Graces!
Touch'd with disdain, with horror fir'd,
CELIA! he murmur'd, and retir'd.
That night no sleep his eyelids prest,
He thought; and thought's a foe to rest:
Or if, by chance, he clos'd his eyes,
What hideous spectres round him rise!
Distemper'd Fancy wildly brings
The broken images of things;
His ruin'd friend, with eye-ball fixt,
Swallowing the draught Despair had mixt;
The frantic wife beside him stands,
With bursting heart, and wringing hands;
And every horror dreams bestow,
Of pining want or raving wo.
Next morn, to check, or cherish thought,
His library's retreat he sought;
He view'd each book, with cold regard,
Of serious sage, or lighter bard;
At length, among the motley band,
The IDLER fell into his hand;
Th' alluring title caught his eye,
It promis'd cold inanity:
He read with rapture and surprise,
And found 'twas pleasant, tho' 'twas wise:
His tea grew cold, whilst he, unheeding,
Pursu'd this reasonable reading.
He wonder'd at the change he found,
Th' elastic spirits nimbly bound;
Time slipt, without disgust, away,
While many a card unanswer'd lay:
Three papers, reeking from the press,
Three pamphlets thin, in azure dress,
Ephemeral literature well known,
The lie and scandal of the town;
Poison of letters, morals, time!
Assassin of our day's fresh prime!
These, on his table, half the day,
Unthought of, and neglected lay.
FLORIO had now full three hours read;
Hours which he us'd to waste in bed;
His pulse beat virtue's vigorous tone,
The reason to himself unknown;
And if he stopped to seek the cause,
Fair CELIA's image filled the pause.
And now, announc'd BELLARIO's name
Had almost quench'd the new-born flame.
'Admit him,' was the ready word
Which first escap'd him, not unheard
When sudden, to his mental sight,
Uprose the horrors of last night;
His plunder'd friend before him stands,
And—'not at home,' his firm commands.
He felt the conquest as a joy
Tho first temptation would destroy.
He knew next day that Hymen's hand,
Would tack the slight and slippery band,

Which, in loose bondage, would ensnare
Bellario bright and Flavia fair.
Oft had he promis'd to attend
The nuptials of his happy friend:
To go—to stay—alike he fears;
At length a bolder flight he dares:
To Celia he resolves to fly,
And catch fresh virtue from her eye,
Though three full weeks did yet remain,
Ere he engag'd to come again.
This plan he tremblingly embrac'd,
With doubtful zeal, and fluttering haste;
Nor ventur'd he one card to read,
Which might his virtuous scheme impede;
Each note, he dreaded might betray him,
And shudder'd lest each rap should stay him.
Behold him seated in his chaise;
With face that self distrust betrays;
He hazards not a single glance,
Nor through the glasses peeps by chance,
Lest some old friend, or haunt well known,
Should melt his resolution down.
Fast as his foaming coursers fly,
Hyde-park attracts his half-rais'd eye;
He steals one fearful, conscious look,
Then drops his eye upon his book.
Triumphant he persists to go;
But gives one sigh to *Rotten-row*.
Long as he view'd Augusta's tow'rs,
The sight relax'd his thinking pow'rs;
In vain he better plans revolves,
While the soft scene his soul dissolves;
The tow'rs once lost, his view he bends,
Where the receding smoke ascends;
But when nor smoke, nor tow'rs arise,
To charm his heart or cheat his eyes;
When once he got entirely clear
From this enfeebling atmosphere;
His mind was brac'd, his spirits light,
His heart was gay, his humour bright.
Thus feeling, at his inmost soul,
The sweet reward of self-controul,
Impatient now, and all alive,
He thought he never should arrive;
At last he spies Sir Gilbert's trees;
Now the near battlements he sees;
The gates he enter'd with delight,
And, self-announc'd, embrac'd the knight:
The youth his joy unfeign'd exprest,
The knight with joy receiv'd his guest,
And own'd, with no unwilling tongue,
'Twas done like men when he was young.
Three weeks subducted, went to prove,
A feeling like old-fashion'd love.
For Celia, not a word she said,
But blush'd, 'celestial, rosy red!'
Her modest charms transport the youth,
Who promis'd everlasting truth.
Celia, in honour of the day,
Unusual splendour would display:
Such was the charm her sweetness gave,
He thought her wedgwood had been *séve*,
Her taste diffused a gracious air,
And chaste Simplicity was there,
Whose secret power, though silent, great is,
The loveliest of the sweet Penates.
Florio, now present to the scene,
With spirits light, and gracious mien,
Sir Gilbert's port politely praises,
And carefully avoids French phrases;
Endures the daily dissertation
On land-tax, and a ruin'd nation;
Listens to many a tedious tale
Of poachers, who deserv'd a jail;
Heard all the business of the quorum,
Each cause and crime produc'd before 'em:
Heard them abuse with complaisance
The language, wines, and wits of France;
Nor did he hum a single air,
While good Sir Gilbert fill'd his chair.
Abroad, with joy and grateful pride,
He walks, with Celia by his side:
A thousand cheerful thoughts arise,
Each rural scene enchants his eyes;
With transports he begins to look
On Nature's all instructive book;
No objects now seem mean, or low,
Which point to Him from whom they flow
A berry or a bud excites
A chain of reasoning which delights,
Which spite of sceptic ebulitions,
Proves atheists not the best logicians.
A tree, a brook, a blade of grass,
Suggests reflections as they pass,
Till Florio, with a sigh, confest
The simplest pleasures are the best
Bellario's systems sink in air,
He feels the perfect, good, and fair.
As pious Celia rais'd the theme
To holy faith and love supreme;
Enlighten'd Florio learn'd to trace
In Nature's God the God of grace.
In wisdom as the convert grew
The hours on rapid pinions flew,
When call'd to dress, that Titus wore
A wig the alter'd Florio swore;
Or else, in estimating time,
He ne'er had mark'd it as a crime,
That he had lost but *one day's* blessing,
When we so many lose, by dressing.
The rest, suffice it now to say,
Was finish'd in the usual way.
Cupid, impatient for his hour,
Revil'd slow Themis' tedious power,
Whose parchment legends, singing, sealing,
Are cruel forms for Love to deal in.
At length to Florio's eager eyes,
Behold the day of bliss arise!
The golden sun illumes the globe,
The burning torch, the saffron robe.
Just as of old, glad Hymen wears,
And Cupid, as of old, appears
In Hymen's train; so strange the case
They hardly knew each other's face;
Yet both confess'd with glowing heart
They never were design'd to part;
Quoth Hymen, sure you're strangely slighted
At weddings not to be invited;
The reason's clear enough, quoth Cupid,
My company is thought but stupid,
Where Plutus is the favourite guest,
For he and I scarce speak at best.
The self-same sun which joins the twain
Sees Flavia sever'd from her swain;
Bellario sues for a divorce,
And both pursue their sep'rate course.
Oh wedded love! thy bliss how rare!
And yet the ill-assorted pair;
The pair who choose at Fashion's voice,
Or drag the chain of venal choice;

Have little cause to curse the state,
Who *make*, should never *blame* their fate,
Such flimsy ties, say where's the wonder,
If Doctors Commons snap asunder.
In either case, 'tis still the wife,
Gives cast and colour to the life.
Florio escap'd from Fashion's school
His heart and conduct learns to rule;
Conscience his useful life approves;
He serves his God, his country loves;
Reveres her laws, protects her rights,
And, for her interests, pleads or fights
Reviews with scorn his former life,
And, for his rescue, thanks his wife.

THE SLAVE TRADE:

A POEM.

———O great design!
Ye sons of mercy! O complete your work;
Wrench from Oppression's hand the iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Thompson's "Liberty."

If Heaven has into being deign'd to call
Thy light, O liberty! to shine on all;
Bright intellectual sun! why does thy ray
To earth distribute only partial day?
Since no resisting cause from spirit flows
Thy universal presence to oppose;
No obstacles by nature's hand imprest,
Thy subtle and ethereal beams arrest;
Not sway'd by Matter is thy course benign,
Or more direct or more oblique to shine;
Nor Motion's laws can speed thy active course,
Nor strong Repulsion's pow'rs obstruct thy force;
Since there is no convexity in mind,
Why are thy genial beams to parts confin'd?
While the chill north with thy bright ray is blest,
Why should fell darkness half the south invest?
Was it decreed, fair Freedom! at thy birth,
That thou should'd ne'er irradiate *all* the earth?
While Britain basks in thy full blaze of light,
Why lies sad Afric quench'd in total night?
Thee only, *sober* goddess! I attest,
In smiles chastis'd, and decent graces drest,
To thee alone pure daughter of the skies,
The hallow'd incense of the bard should rise?
Not that mad liberty, in whose wild praise
Too oft he trims his prostituted bays;
Not that unlicens'd monster of the crowd,
Whose roar terrific bursts in peals so loud,
Deaf'ning the ear of Peace; fierce Faction's tool,
Of rash Sedition born, and mad Misrule;
Whose stubborn mouth, rejecting Reason's reign,
No strength can govern, and no skill restrain;
Whose magic cries the frantic vulgar draw
To spurn at Order, and to outrage Law;
To tread on grave Authority and Pow'r,
And shake the work of ages in an hour:
Convuls'd her voice, and pestilent her breath,
She raves of mercy, while she deals out death;
Each blast is fate; she darts from either hand
Red conflagration o'er the astonish'd land;
Clamouring for peace, she rends the air with noise,
And to reform a part, the whole destroys.
Reviles oppression only to oppress,
And in the act of murder, breathes redress.
Such have we seen on Freedom's genuine coast,
Bellowing for blessings which were never lost.
'Tis past, and Reason rules the lucid hour,
And beauteous Order reassumes his power:
Lord of the bright ascendant may he reign,
Till perfect Peace eternal sway maintain!*
O, plaintive Southerne!† whose impassion'd page
Can melt the soul to grief, or rouse to rage!
Now, when congenial themes engage the Muse,
She burns to emulate thy generous views;
Her failing efforts mock her fond desires,
She shares thy feelings, not partakes thy fires.
Strange pow'r of song the strain that warms the heart
Seems the same inspiration to impart;
Touch'd by th' extrinsic energy alone,
We think the flame which melts us is our own:
Deceiv'd, for genius we mistake delight,
Charm'd as we read, we fancy we can write.
Though not to me, sweet bard, thy pow'rs belong,
The cause I plead shall sanctify my song.
The Muse awakes no artificial fire,
For Truth rejects what Fancy would inspire:
Here Art would weave her gayest flow'rs in vain,
The bright invention Nature would disdain.
For no fictitious ills these numbers flow,
But living anguish, and substantial wo;
No individual griefs my bosom melt,
For millions feel what Oronoko felt:
Fir'd by no single wrongs, the countless host
I mourn, by rapine dragg'd from Afric's coast.
Perish th' illiberal thought which would debase
The native genius of the sable race!
Perish the proud philosophy, which sought
To rob them of the pow'rs of equal thought!
Does then th' immortal principle within
Change with the casual colour of the skin?
Does Matter govern Spirit? or is mind
Degraded by the form to which 'tis join'd?
No: they have heads to think, and hearts to feel,
And souls to act, with firm, though erring zeal:
For they have keen affections, kind desires,
Love strong as death, and active patriot fires;

* Alluding to the riots of London in the year 1780.
† Author of the tragedy of Oronoko.

All the rude energy, the fervid flame,
Of high-soul'd passion, and ingenuous shame:
Strong, but luxuriant virtues boldly shoot
From the wild vigour of a savage root.
Nor weak their sense of honour's proud control,
For Pride is virtue in a Pagan soul;
A sense of worth, a conscience of desert,
A high, unbroken haughtiness of heart;
That self-same stuff which erst proud empires sway'd,
Of which the conquerors of the world were made.
Capricious fate of men! that very pride
In Afric scourg'd, in Rome was deify'd.
No muse, O Quashi!* shall thy deeds relate,
No statue snatch thee from oblivious fate!
For thou wast born where never gentle Muse
On valour's grave the flow'rs of Genius strews;
And thou wast born where no recording page
Plucks the fair deed from Time's devouring rage:
Had Fortune plac'd thee on some happier coast,
Where *polis'd* Pagans souls heroic boast,
To thee who sought'st a voluntary grave,
Th' injur'd honours of thy name to save,
Whose generous arm thy barbarous master spar'd,
Altars had smok'd, and temples had been rear'd.
Whene'er to Afric's shores I turn my eyes,
Horrors of deepest, deadliest guilt arise;
I see, by more than Fancy's mirror shown,
The burning village and the blazing town:
See the dire victim torn from social life,
The shrieking babe, the agonizing wife!
She, wretch forlorn! is dragg'd by hostile hands,
To distant tyrants sold, in distant lands!
Transmitted miseries, and successive chains,
The sole sad heritage her child obtains!
E'en this last wretched boon their foes deny,
To weep together, or together die.
By felon hands, by one relentless stroke,
See the fond links of feeling Nature broke!
The fibres twisting round a parent's heart,
Torn from their grasp, and bleeding as they part.
Hold! murderer's, hold! nor aggravate distress;
Respect the passions you yourselves possess,
Ev'n you of ruffian heart, and ruthless hand,
Love your own offspring, love your native land:
Ev'n you, with fond impatient feelings burn,
Though free as air, though certain of return,
Then, if to you who voluntarily roam,
So dear the memory of your distant home,
O think how absence the lov'd scene endears
To him whose food is groans, whose drink is tears;

Think on the wretch whose aggravated pains
To exile misery adds, to misery chains.
If warm *your* heart, to British feelings true,
As dear his land to him as yours to you;
And Liberty, in you a hallow'd flame,
Burns, unextinguish'd in his breast the same.
Then leave him holy Freedom's cheering smile,
The heav'n-taught fondness for the parent soil;
Revere affections mingled with our frame,
In every nature, every clime the same;
In all, these feelings equal sway maintain:
In all the love of Home and Freedom reign;
And Tempe's vale, and parch'd Angola's sand,
One equal fondness of their son's command.
Th' unconquer'd savage laughs at pain and toil,
Basking in Freedom's beams which gild his native soil.
Does thirst of empire, does desire of fame,
(For these are specious crimes) our rage inflame?
No: sordid lust of gold their fate controls,
The basest appetite of basest souls;
Gold, better gain'd by what their ripening sky,
Their fertile fields, their arts,* and mines supply.
What wrongs, what injuries does Oppression plead,
To smooth the crime and sanctify the deed?
What strange offence, what aggravated sin?
They stand convicted—of a darker skin!
Barbarians, hold! th' opprobrious commerce spare,
Respect HIS sacred image which they bear.
Though dark and savage, ignorant and blind,
They claim the common privilege of kind;
Let malice strip them of each other plea,
They still are men, and men should still be free.
Insulted Reason loaths the inverted trade—
Loathes, as she views the human purchase made;
The outrag'd goddess, with abhorrent eyes,
Sees MAN the traffic, SOULS the merchandise!
Man, whom fair Commerce taught with judging eye,
And liberal hand, to barter or to buy,
Indignant Nature blushes to behold,
Degraded man himself, truck'd, barter'd, sold:
Of ev'ry native privilege bereft,
Yet curs'd with ev'ry wounded feeling left.
Hard lot! each brutal suff'ring to sustain,
Yet keep the sense acute of human pain.
Plead not, in reason's palpable abuse,
Their sonse of feeling† callous and obtuse:
From heads to hearts lies Nature's plain appeal,
Though few can reason, all mankind can feel.
Though wit may boast a livelier dread of shame,
A loftier sense of long refinement claim;
Though polish'd manners may fresh wants invent,
And nice distinctions nicer souls torment;
Though these on finer spirits heavier fall,
Yet natural evils are the same to all.
Tho' wounds there are which reason's force may heal,
There needs no logic sure to make us feel.
The nerve, howe'er untutor'd, can sustain
A sharp unutterable sense of pain;

* It is a point of honour among negroes of a high spirit to die rather than to suffer their glossy skin to bear the mark of the whip. Quashi had somehow offended his master, a young planter with whom he had been bred up in the endearing intimacy of a play-fellow. His services had been faithful; his attachment affectionate. The master resolved to punish him, and pursued him for that purpose. In trying to escape Quashi stumbled and fell; the master fell upon him: they wrestled long with doubtful victory; at length Quashi got uppermost, and being firmly seated on his master's breast, he secured his legs with one hand, and with the other drew a sharp knife, then said, 'master, I have been bred up with you from a child; I loved you as myself; in return, you have condemned me to a punishment of which I must ever have borne the marks—thus only can I avoid them;' so saying, he drew the knife with all his strength across his own throat, and fell down dead, without a groan, on his master's body.—*Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment of African Slaves.*

* Besides many valuable productions of the soil, cloths and carpets of exquisite manufacture are brought from the coast of Guinea.

† Nothing is more frequent than this cruel and stupid argument, that they do not feel the miseries inflicted on them as Europeans would do.

As exquisitely fashion'd in a slave,
As where unequal fate a sceptre gave.
Sense is as keen where Gambia's waters glide,
As where proud Tiber rolls his classic tide.
Though verse or rhetoric point the feeling line,
They do not whet sensation, but define.
Did ever wretch less feel the galling chain,
When Zeno prov'd there was no ill in pain?
In vain the sage to smooth its horror tries;
Spartans and Helots see with different eyes;
Their miseries philosophic quirks deride,
Slaves groan in pangs disown'd by stoic pride.
When the fierce sun darts vertical his beams,
And thirst and hunger mix their wild extremes;
When the sharp iron* wounds his inmost soul,
And his strain'd eyes in burning anguish roll;
Will the parch'd negro own, ere he expire,
No pain in hunger, and no heat in fire?
For him, when agony his frame destroys,
What hope of present fame or future joys?
For *that* have heroes shorten'd nature's date,
For *this* have martyrs gladly met their fate;
But him forlorn, no heroes pride sustains,
No martyr's blissful vision soothe his pains;
Sullen, he mingles with his kindred dust,
For he has learn'd to dread the Christian's trust;
To him what mercy can that God display,
Whose servants murder, and whose sons betray?
Savage! thy venial error I deplore,
They are *not* Christians who infest thy shore.
O thou sad spirit, whose preposterous yoke
The great deliverer Death, at length has broke,
Releas'd from misery, and escap'd from care,
Go, meet that mercy man deny'd thee here.
In thy dark home, sure refuge of th' oppress'd,
The wicked vex not, and the weary rest.
And, if some notions, vague and undefin'd,
Of future terrors have assail'd thy mind;
If such thy masters have presum'd to teach,
As terrors only they are prone to preach;
(For should they paint eternal Mercy's reign,
Where were the oppressor's rod, the captive's chain?)
If, then, thy troubled soul has learn'd to dread
The dark unknown thy trembling footsteps tread;
On Him, who made thee what thou art, depend;
He, who withholds the means, accepts the end.
Thy metal night thy Saviour will not blame;
He died for those who never heard his name.
Not *thine* the reckoning dire of Light abus'd,
Knowledge disgrac'd, and Liberty misus'd;
On *thee* no awful judge incens'd shall sit
For parts perverted, and dishonour'd wit.
Where ignorance may be found the safest plea,
How many learn'd and wise shall envy *thee!*
And thou, white savage! whether lust of gold
Or lust of conquest rule thee uncontroll'd!
Hero, or robber!—by whatever name!—
Thou plead thy impious claim to wealth or fame;
Whether inferior mischief be thy boast,
A tyrant trader rifling *Congo's* coast;
Or bolder carnage track thy crimson way,
Kings dispossess'd, and provinces thy prey;
Whether thou pant to tame earth's distant bound;
All Cortez murder'd, all Columbus found;
O'er plunder'd realms to reign, detested lord,
Make millions wretched, and thyself abhorr'd:—
Whether Cartouche in forests break the law,
Or bolder Cæsar keep the world in awe;
In Reason's eye, in Wisdom's fair account,
Your sum of glory boasts a like amount;
The means may differ, but the end's the same,
Conquest is pillage with a nobler name,
Who makes the sum of human blessings less,
Or sinks the stock of general happiness,
Tho' erring fame may grace, tho' false renown
His life may blazon or his memory crown;
Yet the last audit shall reverse the cause;
And God shall vindicate his broken laws.
Had those advent'rous spirits who explore
Thro' ocean's trackless wastes, the far-sought shore;
Whether of wealth insatiate, or of pow'r,
Conquerors who waste, or ruffian's who devour:
Had these possess'd, O Cook! thy gentle mind,
Thy love of arts, thy love of human kind;
Had these pursued thy mild and liberal plan,
Discoveries had not been a curse to man!
Then, bless'd Philanthropy! thy social hands,
Had link'd dissever'd worlds in brothers' bands;
Careless, if colour, or if clime divide;
Then lov'd and loving, man had liv'd and died.
Then with pernicious skill we had not known
To bring their vices back and leave our own.
The purest wreaths which hang on Glory's shrine,
For empires founded, peaceful Penn! are thine;
No blood-stain'd laurels crown'd thy virtuous toil,
No slaughter'd natives drench'd thy fair-earn'd soil,
Still thy meek spirit in thy flock* survives,
Consistent still, *their* doctrines rule their lives;
Thy followers only have effac'd the shame,
Inscrib'd by Slavery on the Christian name.
Shall Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns,
Forge chains for others she herself disdains?
Forbid it, Heaven! O let the nations know
The liberty she loves, she will bestow;
Not to herself the glorious gift confin'd,
She spreads the blessing wide as human kind,
And, scorning narrow views of time and place,
Bids all be free in earth's extended space.
What page of human annals can record
A deed so bright as human rights restor'd?
O may that god-like deed, that shining page,
Redeem our fame, and consecrate our age!
And let this glory mark our favour'd shore,
To curb False Freedom and the True restore.
And see the cherub Mercy from above,
Descending softly, quits the sphere of love!
On Britain's isle she sheds her heavenly dew;
And breathes her spirit o'er th' enlighten'd few.
From soul to soul the spreading influence steals
Till every breast the soft contagion feels.
She speeds, exulting, to the burning shore,
With the best message angel ever bore;
Hark! 'tis the note which spoke a Saviour's birth!
Glory to God on high, and peace on earth!
She vindicates the pow'r in Heaven ador'd,

* This is not said figuratively. The writer of these lines has seen a complete set of chains, fitted to every separate limb of these unhappy, innocent men; together with instruments for wrenching open the jaws, contrived with such ingenious cruelty as would gratify the tender mercies of an inquisitor.

* The Quakers have emancipated all their slaves throughout America.

She stills the clank of chains, and sheathes the sword;
She cheers the mourner, and with soothing hands
From bursting hearts unbinds th' oppressor's bands;
Restores the lustre of the Christian name,
And clears the foulest blot that dimm'd its fame.
As the mild spirit hovers o'er the coast,
A fresher hue their wither'd landscapes boast;
Her healing smiles the ruin'd scenes repair,
And blasted Nature wears a joyous air;
While she proclaims thro' all their spicy groves,
'Henceforth your fruits, your labours, and your loves,
'All that your sires possess'd, or you have sown,
'Sacred from plunder—all is now YOUR OWN.'
And now, her high commission from above,
Stamp'd with the holy characters of love,
The meek-ey'd spirit waving in her hand,
Breathes manumission o'er the rescu'd land;
She tears the banner stain'd with blood and tears,
And LIBERTY! thy shining standard rears!
As the bright ensign's glory she displays,
See pale OPPRESSION faints beneath the blaze!
The giant dies! no more his frown appals,
The chain, untouch'd drops off; the fetter falls.
Astonish'd Echo tells the vocal shore,
Oppression's fall'n, and Slavery is no more!
The dusky myriads crowd the sultry plain,
All hail that MERCY, long invok'd in vain.
Victorious Pow r! she bursts their two-fold bands,
And Faith and Freedom spring from Britain's hands.
And Thou! great source of Nature and of Grace,
Who of one blood didst form the human race
Look down in mercy in thy chosen time,
With equal eye on Afric's suff'ring clime:
Disperse her shades of intellectual night,
Repeat thy high behest—Let there be Light
Bring each benighted soul, great God, to Thee,
And with thy wide salvation make them free!

DAN AND JANE:

OR FAITH AND WORKS.—A TALE.

GOOD, Dan and Jane were man and wife,
And liv'd a loving kind of life;
One point, however, they disputed,
And each by turns his mate confuted.
'Twas Faith and Works—this knotty question
They found not easy of digestion.
While Dan alone for faith contended,
Jane equally good works defended.
'They are not Christians sure, but Turks
Who build on faith and scoff at works,'
Quoth Jane—while eager Dan reply'd,
'By none but heathens faith's deny'd.'
'I'll tell you wife,' at length quoth Dan,
'A story of a right good man.
A patriarch sage, of ancient days,
A man of faith, whom all must praise
In his own country he possess'd,
Whate'er can make a wise man blest;
His was the flock, the field, the spring,
In short, a little rural king.
Yet, pleas'd, he quits his native land,
By faith in the divine command.
God bade him go; and he, content,
Went forth, not knowing where he went.
He trusted in the promise made,
And, undisputing strait obey'd.
The heavenly word he did not doubt,
But prov'd his faith by going out.
Jane answer'd, with some little pride—
'I've an example on my side;
And tho' my tale be somewhat longer,
I trust you'll find it vastly stronger.
I'll tell you, Daniel, of a man,
The holiest since the world began:
Who now God's favour is receiving
For prompt *obeying*, not *believing*.
One only son this man possest,
In whom his righteous age was blest;
And more to mark the grace of heaven,
This son by miracle was given.
And from this child the word divine
Had promis'd an illustrious line.
When lo! at once a voice he hears,
Which sounds like thunder in his ears.
God says—Go sacrifice thy son!
—This moment, Lord, it shall be done.
He goes, and instantly prepares,
To slay the child of many prayers.
Now here you see the grand expedience,
Of *works*, of actual sound *obedience*.
This was not *faith*, but *act* and deed,
The Lord commands—the child shalt bleed.'
Thus Abraham *acted*,' Jenny cried;
'Thus Abraham *trusted*,' Dan replied
'Abraham,' quoth Jane, 'why that's my man!'
'No, Abraham's him I mean,' says Dan.
'He stands a monument of *faith*;'—
'No, 'tis for *works* the Scripture saith.
''Tis for his faith that I defend him;'
''Tis for obedience I commend him.'
Thus he—thus she—both warmly feel,
And lose their temper in their zeal;
Too quick each other's choice to blame,
They did not see each meant the same.
'At length, good wife,' said honest Dan,
'We're talking of the self-same man,
The works you praise I own indeed,
Grow from that faith for which I plead;
And Abraham, whom for faith I quote,
For works deserves especial note:
'Tis not enough of faith to *talk*,
A man of God with God must walk
Our doctrines are at last the same,
They only differ in the name:
The faith I fight for, is the root;
The works you value are the fruit
How shall you know my creed 's sincere,
Unless in works my faith appear?
How shall I know a tree's alive,
Unless I see it bear and thrive?
Your works not growing on my root,
Would prove they were not genuine fruit.

If faith produce no works, I see,'
That faith is not a living tree.
Thus faith and works together grow,
No separate life they e'er can know:
They're soul and body, hand and heart,
What God hath join'd let no man part.'

AN HEROIC EPISTLE.

TO MISS SALLY HORNE,—AGED THREE YEARS,

YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF DR. HORNE, LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH.

Written on the blank leaves of "Mother Bunch's Tales;" and showing their superiority of these histories to most others.

To thee, fair creature, SALLY HORNE,
And sure a fairer ne'er was born;
A grave biographer I send,
By NEWBERRY in the church-yard penn'd;
(Or if to truth my phrase I stinted,
By NEWBERRY in the church-yard printed;)
Might Mother Bunch—a worthier sage,
Ne'er fill'd, I ween th' historic page;
For she, of kings and queens can prate,
As fast as patriotic KATE;*
Nor vents like her, her idle spleen,
Merely because 'tis king or queen.
KATE, who each subject makes a slave,
Would make each potentate a knave;
Though Britons can the converse prove,
A king who reigns and rules by love.
While Mother Bunch's honest story,
Unaw'd by WHIG, unwarp'd by TORY;
Paints sovereigns with impartial pen,
Some good, some bad, like other men.
Oh, there are few such books as these,
Which only mean to teach or please;
Read Mother Bunch, then charming SALLY,
Her writings, with your taste will tally.
No pride of learning she displays,
Nor reads one word an hundred ways;
To please the young she lays before 'em
A simple tale, *sans variorum;*
With notes and margins unperplext,
And comments which confuse the text.
No double senses interfere
To puzzle what before was clear.
Here no mistaken dates deceive ye,
Which oft occur from HUME to LIVY.
Her dates, more safe and more sublime,
Seize the broad phrase—'*Once on a time.*'
Then Mother Bunch is no misleader
In citing authors who precede her;
Unlike our modern wits of note,
Who purposely and oft misquote;
Who injure history, or intend it,
As much as KENNICOT to mend it;
And seek no less the truth to mangle,
Than he to clear and disentangle.
These short digressions we apply
Our author's fame to magnify:
She seeks not to bewilder youth,
But all is true she gives for truth:
And still, to analyze you're able,
Fable is safe while given as fable;
As mere invention you receive it,
You know 'tis false, and disbelieve it;
While that bad chemistry which brings
And mixes up incongruous things,
With genuine fact invention blending
As if true history wanted mending;
Or flav'ring, to mislead our youth,
Mere fable with a dash of truth;
In all these heterogeneous tales
The injudicious project fails;
Of *truth* you do not get your measure,
And of pure *fiction* lose the pleasure.
But Mother Bunch rejects such arts,
A sounder taste her work imparts.
Then if for prosperous turns you look,
There's no such other history book.
Old authors show, nor do I wrong 'em,
How tyrants shar'd the world among em
And all we learn of ancient times,
Are human woes and human crimes.
They tell us naught but dismal tales,
How virtue sinks, and vice prevails;
And all their labours but declare
The miseries of the good and fair;
How one brave captive in a quarrel
Was tumbled down hill in a barrel!
In fiery flames how some did fry,
Only because they dar'd not lie!
How female victims meet their doom,
At Aulis one, and more at Rome!
How ease the hero's laurels stain'd
How CAPUA lost what CANNÆ gain'd!
How *he*, whom long success attends,
Is kill'd at home among his friends!
How ATHENS, him who serv'd so well,
Rewarded with an oyster-shell!
How NERO stabb'd a mother's breast
Ah, barbarous CLIO, spare the rest;
Conceal these horrors, if thou'rt able,
If these be truth, oh give me fable!
Till real deed are fit to mention,
Regale my feelings with invention.
But Mother Bunch's morals tell
How blest all were who acted well!
How the good little girl 's regarded,
And boy who learns his book rewarded.
How loss of favour follows rudeness,
While sugar-plumbs repay all goodness
How she who learns to read or write,
Will get a coach or chariot by't;
And not a faggot-maker's daughter
But has it at her christening taught her,
By some invited fairy guest,
That she shall wed a prince at least;
And thro' the whole this truth's pursu'd
That to be happy 's to be good.
If these to life be contradictions,
Mark the morality of fictions;
Axioms more popular they teach,

* See Mrs. *Macaulay's* History of England.

That to be good is to be rich!
For all the misses marry kings,
And diamonds are but common things;
While dames in history hardly get 'em,
Our heroines ope their mouths and spit 'em.
Oh, this is profitable learning,
Past cold historians' dull discerning,
Who, whilo their annals they impart,
Expose, but seldom mend the heart.
I grant, they teach to know mankind,
To learn we're wretched, weak, and blind:
But till the heart from vice is clear,
Who wants to know what passes there?
Till Hercules to cleanse was able,
No doubt they *shut* th' Augean stable.
Here too in high emphatic tone
The power of female worth is shown;
Ev'n enterprising Joan of Arc
Falls short of true heroic mark:
THALESTRIS was a mere home-keeper,
And swift CAMILLA but a creeper.
Here deeds of valour are as common
As song or dance to real woman;
And meekest damsels find it facile
To storm a giant's moated castle;
Where drawbridges do open fly
If virgin foot approaches nigh;
And brazen-gates with twenty locks,
At which an army vainly knocks,
Fly ope, nor on their hinges linger,
At touch of virgin's little finger.
Then slow attacks, and tiresome sieges,
Which history makes the work of ages,
Are here, by means of fairy power,
Achiev'd with ease in half an hour.
Tactics! *they* prove, there 's nothing in it,
Who conquer kingdoms in a minute:
They never hear of ten years jars,
(For TROY'S the average length of wars.)
And diplomatic form and rule
Might learn from Mother Bunch's school,
How rapidly are state intrigues
Convey'd with boots of seven long leagues.
Here farther too, our great commanders,
Who conquer'd France, and rescued Flanders,
From Mother Bunch's Tales might he
Some secrets worth a general's ear;
How armies need not stop to bait,
And heroes never drink or eat;
Wrapt in sublimer occupation
They scorn such vulgar renovation.
Your British generals cannot keep
Themselves and fellows half so cheap;
For men and horses, out of books,
Call, one for corn, and one for cooks;
And dull historic nags must stay
For provender of oats and hay;
While *these* bold heroes wing their flight
Through twenty kingdoms in a night;
Of silvery dews they snatch a cup,
Or on a slice of moonshine sup;
And while they fly to meet their queen,
With half the convex world between,
Their milk-white palfreys, scorning grass,
Just crop a rose-leaf as they pass.
Then Mother Bunch's morals strike,
By praising friend and foe alike.
What virtue to the world is lost,
Because on thy ill-fated coast,
O Carthage! sung alone by foes,
The sun of history never rose!
Fertile in heroes, didst thou own
The muse that makes those heroes known;
Then had the bright reverse appear'd
And Carthaginian truth been clear'd:
On Punic faith, so long revil'd,
The wily African had smil'd;
And, possibly, not much had err'd,
If we of *Roman* fraud had heard.
Then leave your Robertson's and Bryants,
For John, the murderer of giants;
Since all mythology profane
Is quite as doubtful, quite as vain.
Though Bryant, learned friend of youth
His fable consecrates to truth:
And Robertson with just applause
His finish'd portraits fairly draws.
Yet history, great Raleigh knew,
And knowing, griev'd, may not be true:
For how the facts are we to know
Which pass'd a thousand years ago
When he no just account could get
Of quarrel in the adjacent street;
Though from his chair the noise he heard,
The tale of each relater err'd.
But if the fact 's recorded right,
The motive seldom comes in sight;
Hence, while the fairest deed we blame,
We often crown the worst with fame.
Then read, if genuine truth you'd glean,
Those who were actors in the scene;
Hear, with delight, the modest Greek,
Of his renown'd *ten thousand* speak
His commentaries* read again
Who led the troops and held the pen,
The way to conquest best he show'd,
Who trod ere he prescrib'd the road.
Read *him*, for lofty periods fam'd,
Who Charles's age adorn'd and sham'd;
Read Clarendon; unaw'd, unbrib'd,
Who rul'd th' events his pen describ'd;
Who law and courts, and senates knew,
And saw the sources whence he drew.
Yet, lovely SALLY, be not frighten'd,
Nor dread to have thy mind enlighten'd;
Admire with me the fair alliance
Which mirth, at Maudlin,† makes with science:
How humour may with learning dwell,
Go ask papa—for he can tell.

MARGERY TWO-SHOES.

* Cesar.

† Dr. *Horne* was at this time president of Magdalen College, Oxford, where this little poem was written.

SENSIBILITY:

AN EPISTLE TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. BOSCAWEN.

ACCEPT, BOSCAWEN! these unpolished lays,
Nor blame too much the verse you cannot praise.
For you, far other bards have wak'd the string,
Far other bards for you were wont to sing;

Yet on the gale their parting music steals,
Yet your charm'd ear the lov'd impression feels:
You heard the lyres of Littleton and Young,
And this a grace, and that a seraph strung.
These are no more! but not with these decline
The attic chasteness or the vig'rous line.
Still *sad Elfrida's poet** shall complain,
Still, either Warton breathe his classic strain:
While for the wonders of the Gothic page,
Otranto's fame shall vindicate the age,
Nor tremble lest the tuneful art expire,
While Beattie strikes anew old Spencer's lyre;
He best to paint the genuine minstrel knew,
Who from himself, the living portrait drew.
Though Latian bards had gloried in his name,
When in full brightness burnt the Latian flame;
Yet fir'd with loftier hopes than transient bays,
See Lowth† despise the meed of mortal praise;
Spurn the cheap wreath by human science won,
Borne on the wing sublime of Amos' son!
He seiz'd the mantle as the prophet flew,
And with his mantle caught his spirit too.
To snatch bright beauty from devouring fate,
And lengthen nature's transitory date;
At once the critic's and the painter's art,
With Fresnoy's skill and Guido's grace impart:
To form with code correct the graphic school,
And lawless fancy curb by sober rule;
To show how genius fires, how taste restrains,
While, what both are, his pencil best explains;
Have we not Reynolds ?‡ lives not Jenyns yet,
To prove his lowest title was a wit ?§
Though purer flames thy hallow'd zeal inspire
Than e'er were kindled at the Muse's fire,
Thee, mitred Chester !‖ all the Nine shall boast;
And is not Johnson ours? himself a host!
Yes, still for you your gentle stars dispense:
The charm of friendship and the feast of sense:
Yours is the bliss, and Heav'n no dearer sends,
To call the wisest, brightest, best, your friends.
And while to these I raise the votive line,
O! let me grateful own these friends are mine;
With Carter trace the wit to Athens known,
Or view in Montague that wit our own:
Or mark, well pleas'd, Chapone's instructive page,
Intent to raise the morals of the age:
Or boast, in Walsingham, the various power,
To cheer the lonely, grace the letter'd hour;
Delany too is ours, serenely bright,
Wisdom's strong ray, and virtue's milder light:
And she who bless'd the friend, and grac'd the lays
Of poignant Swift, still gilds our social days;
Long, long protract thy light, O star benign!
Whose setting beams with milder lustre shine.
Nor, Barbauld, shall my glowing heart refuse
Its tribute to thy virtues, or thy muse;
This humble merit shall at least be mine,
The poet's chaplet for thy brow to twine;
My verse thy talents to the world shall teach,
And praise the genius it despairs to reach.
Yet what is wit, and what the poet's art?
Can genius shield the vulnerable heart?
Ah no! where bright imagination reigns,
The fine wrought spirit feels acuter pains;
Where glow exalted sense and taste refin'd,
There keener anguish rankles in the mind;
There, feeling is diffus'd through ev'ry part,
Thrills in each nerve, and lives in all the heart;
And those whose gen'rous souls each tear would keep
From other's eyes, are born themselves to weep.
Can all the boasted pow'rs of wit and song,
Of life one pang remove, one hour prolong?
Fallacious hope! which daily truths deride;
For you, alas! have wept, and Garrick dy'd!
O shades of Hampton! witness, as I mourn,
Could wit or song elude your fav'rite's urn?
Though living virtue still your haunt endears,
Yet buried worth shall justify my tears.
Who now with spirit keen, yet judgment cool,
The errors of my orphan muse shall rule?
With keen acumen how his piercing eye,
The fault conceal'd from vulgar view would spy!
While with a generous warmth he strove to hide,
Nay vindicate the fault his taste had spy'd.
So pleas'd could he detect a happy line
That he would fancy merit ev'n in mine.
His wit so pointed it ne'er miss'd its end,
And so well temper'd it ne'er lost a friend;
How his keen eye, quick mind, and ardent heart,
Impov'rish'd nature, and exhausted art,
A *muse of fire* has sung,* if muse could trace,
Or verse retrieve the evanescent grace!
How rival bards with rival statesmen strove,
Who most should gain his praise or win his love!
Opposing parties to one point he drew,
Thus Tully's Atticus was Cæsar's too.
Tho' time his mellowing hand across has stole,
Soft'ning the tints of sorrow on the soul;
The deep impression long my heart shall fill,
And ev'ry fainter trace be perfect still.
Forgive, my friend, if wounded memory melt,
You best can pardon who have deepest felt,
You, who for Britain's hero† and your own,
The deadliest pang which rend the soul have known;
You, who have found how much the feeling heart
Shapes its own wound, and points itself the dart;
You, who are call'd the varied loss to mourn;
You, who have clasp'd a son's untimely urn;
You, who from frequent fond experience feel
The wounds such minds receive can never heal;
That grief a thousand entrances can find,
Where parts superior dignify the mind;
Yet would you change that sense acute to gain
A dear bought absence from the poignant pain;
Commuting ev'ry grief whose feelings give
In loveless, joyless apathy to live?

* Milton calls Euripides sad *Electra's poet.*

† Then bishop of London.

‡ See Sir *Joshua Reynold's* very able notes to *Du Fresnoy's* poem on the art of painting, translated by Mr. Mason.—Also, his series of *Discourses to the academy*, which, though written professedly on the subject of painting, contain the principles of general art, and are delivered with so much perspicuous good sense, as to be admirably calculated to assist in forming the taste of the general reader.

§ Mr. *Soame Jenyns* had just published his work *On the internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.*

‖ Now bishop of London—See his admirable poem on death.

* See Mr. *Sheridan's* beautiful monody.

† Admiral *Boscawen.*

For though in souls where energies abound,
Pain through its numerous avenues can wound;
Yet the same avenues are open still,
To casual blessings as to casual ill.
Nor is the trembling temper more awake
To every wound calamity can make,
Than is the finely fashion'd nerve alive
To ev'ry transport pleasure has to give.
Let not the vulgar read this pensive strain,
Their jests the tender anguish would profane.
Yet these some deem the happiest of their kind,
Whose low enjoyments never reach the mind;
Who ne'er a pain but for themselves have known,
Who ne'er have felt a sorrow but their own:
Who deem romantic ev'ry finer thought
Conceiv'd by pity, or by friendship wrought;
Whose insulated souls ne'er feel the pow'r
Of gen'rous sympathy's extatic hour;
Whose disconnected hearts ne'er taste the bliss
Extracted from another's happiness;
Who ne'er the high heroic duty know,
For public good the private to forego.
Then wherefore happy? where's the kindred mind?
Where the large soul which takes in human kind?
Yes—'tis the untold sorrow to explain,
To mitigate the unsuspected pain;
The rule of holy sympathy to keep,
Joy for the Joyful, tears for them that weep:
To these the virtuous half their pleasures owe,
Pleasures, the selfish are not born to know;
They never know in all their coarser bliss,
The sacred rapture of a pain like this.
Then take ye happy vulgar take your part
Of sordid joy which never touch'd the heart.
Benevolence, which seldom stays to choose,
Lest pausing Prudence tempt her to refuse;
Friendship, which once determin'd, never swerves,
Weighs ere it trusts, but weighs not ere it serves.
And soft-ey'd Pity, and Forgiveness bland,
And melting *Charity with open hand;*
And artless love, believing and believ'd,
And honest Confidence which ne'er deceiv'd;
And mercy, stretching out ere Want can speak,
To wipe the tear which stains Affliction's cheek;
These ye have never known—then take your part
Of sordid joy which never touch'd the heart.
You who have melted in bright glory's flame,
Or felt the grateful breath of well-earn'd fame;
Or you, the chosen agents from above,
Whose bounty vindicates Almighty love;
You, who subdue the vain desire of show,
Not to accumulate but to bestow;
You who the dreary haunts of sorrow seek,
Raise the sunk heart, and flush the fading cheek;
You, who divide the joys and share the pains,
When merit triumphs, or oppress'd complains;
You, who with pensive Petrarch, love to mourn,
Or weave the garland for Tibullus' urn;
You, whose touch'd hearts with real sorrows swell,
Or feel, when genius paints those sorrows well,
Would you renounce such energies as these
For vulgar pleasures or for selfish ease?
Would you to 'scape the pain, the joy forego,
And miss the transport to avoid the wo?
Would you the sense of actual pity lose,
Or cease to share the mournings of the muse?
No, Greville,* no!—thy song, tho' steep'd in tears,
Though all thy soul in all thy strain appears;
Yet would'st thou all thy well sung anguish choose,
And all th' inglorious peace thou begg'st refuse:
And while discretion all our views should guide,
Beware, lest secret aims and ends she hide;
Though 'midst the crowd of virtues, 'tis her part,
Like a firm sentinel—to guard the heart;
Beware, lest Prudence 'self become unjust,
Who never was deceiv'd, I would not trust;
Prudence must never be suspicion's slave,
The World's wise man is more than half a knave.
And you, Boscawen, while you fondly melt,
In raptures none but mothers ever felt;
And as you view, prophetic, in your race,
All Levison's sweetness, and all Beaufort's grace;
Yet dread what dangers each lov'd child may share,
The youth, if valiant, or the maid, if fair;
You who have felt, so frail is mortal joy!
That, while we clasp the phantom, we destroy;
That perils multiply as blessings flow,
That sorrows grafted on enjoyments grow;
That clouds impending dim our brightest views,
That who have most to love have most to lose;
Yet from these fair possessions would you part,
To shelter from contingent ills your heart?
Would you forego the objects of your prayer
To save the dangers of a distant care?
Renounce the brightness op'ning to your view
For all the safety dulness ever knew?
Would you consent, to shun the fears you prove
That they should merit less, or you less love.
Yet while we claim the sympathy divine,
Which makes, O man, the woes of others thine;
While her fair triumphs swell the modish page,
She drives the sterner virtues from the stage:
While Feeling boasts her ever tearful eye,
Fair Truth, firm Faith, and manly Justice fly;
Justice, prime good! from whose prolific law,
All worth, all virtue, their strong essence draw;
Justice, a grace quite obsolete we hold,
The feign'd Astrea of an age of gold:
The sterling attribute we scarcely own,
While spurious Candour fills the vacant throne.
Sweet Sensibility! Thou secret pow'r
Who shed'st thy gifts upon the natal hour,
Like fairy favours; Art can never seize,
Nor Affectation catch thy power to please;
Thy subtle essence still eludes the chains
Of Definition, and defeats her pains.
Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
Unprompted moral! sudden sense of right!
Perception exquisite! fair Virtue's seed!
Thou quick precursor of the lib'ral deed!
Thou hasty conscience! reason's blushing morn!
Instinctive kindness e'er reflection 's born!
Prompt sense of equity! to thee belongs
The swift redress of unexamin'd wrongs!

* See her beautiful Ode to Indifference.

Eager to serve, the cause perhaps untried,
But always apt to chuse the suff'ring side!
To those who know thee not, no word can paint,
And those who know thee, know all words are faint!
She does not feel thy pow'r who boasts thy flame,
And rounds her every period with thy name;
Nor she who vents her disproportion'd sighs
With pining *Lesbia* when her sparrow dies:
Nor she who melts when hapless *Shore* expires,
While real mis'ry unreliev'd retires!
Who thinks feign'd sorrow all her tears deserve,
And weeps o'er Werter while her children starve,
As words are but th' external marks to tell
The fair ideas in the mind that dwell;
And only are of things the outward sign,
And not the things themselves they but define;
So exclamations, tender tones, fond tears,
And all the graceful drapery Feeling wears;
These are her garb, not her, they but express
Her form, her semblance, her appropriate dress;
And these fair marks, reluctant I relate,
These lovely symbols may be counterfeit.
There are, who fill with brilliant plaints the page,
If a poor linnet meet the gunner's rage;
There are, who for a dying fawn deplore,
As if friend, parent, country, were no more;
Who boast quick rapture trembling in their eye,
If from the spider's snare they snatch a fly;
There are, whose well sung plaints each breast inflame,
And break all hearts—but his from whom they came!
He, scorning life's low duties to attend,
Writes odes on friendship, while he cheats his friend.
Of jails and punishments he grieves to hear,
And pensions 'prison'd virtue with a tear;
While unpaid bills his creditor presents,
And ruin'd innocence his crime laments.
Not so the tender moralist of Tweed,
His gen'rous *man of feeling* feels indeed.
O Love divine! sole source of charity!
More dear one genuine deed perform'd for thee,
Than all the periods Feeling e'er could turn,
Than all thy touching page, perverted Sterne!
Not that by deeds alone this love 's express'd,
If so the affluent only were the bless'd;
One silent wish, one prayer, one soothing word,
The page of mercy shall, well-pleas'd record;
One soul-felt sigh by pow'rless pity given,
Accepted incense! shall ascend to heav'n!
Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our misery from our foibles springs,
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And though but few can serve, yet all may please;
O let th' ungentle-spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
To spread large bounties, though we wish in vain,
Yet all may shun the guilt of giving pain:
To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
With rank to grace them, or to crown with health,
Our little lot denies; yet lib'ral still,
Heav'n gives its counterpoise to every ill,
Nor let us murmur at our stinted pow'rs,
When kindness, love, and concord, may be ours.
The gift of minist'ring to other's ease,
To all her sons impartial she decrees;
The gentle offices of patient love,
Beyond all flattery, and all price above;
The mild forbearance at a brother's fault,
The angry word suppress'd the taunting thought;
Subduing and subdu'd, the petty strife,
Which clouds the colour of domestic life;
The sober comfort, all the peace which springs,
From the large aggregate of little things;
On these small cares of daughter, wife, or friend,
The almost sacred joys of *home* depend:
There Sensibility, thou best may'st reign,
Home is thy true legitimate domain.
A solitary bliss thou ne'er could'st find,
Thy joys with those thou lov'st are intertwin'd.
And he whose helpless tenderness removes
The rankling thorn which wounds the breast he loves,
Smooths not another's rugged path alone,
But clears th' obstruction which impedes his own.
The hint malevolent, the look oblique,
The obvious satire, or implied dislike;
The sneer equivocal, the harsh reply,
And all the cruel language of the eye;
The artful injury, whose venom'd dart,
Scarce wounds the hearing, while it stabs the heart;
The guarded phrase, whose meaning kills, yet told
The list'ner wonders, how you thought it cold;
Small slights, neglect, unmix'd perhaps with hate,
Make up in number what they want in weight.
These and a thousand griefs minute as these,
Corrode our comfort and destroy our ease.
As Feeling tends to good or leans to ill,
It gives fresh force to vice or principle;
'Tis not a gift peculiar to the good,
'Tis often but the virtue of the blood:
And what would seem compassion's moral flow,
Is but a circulation swift or slow:
But to divert it to its proper course,
There wisdom's pow'r appears, there reason's force:
If ill-directed it pursue the wrong,
It adds new strength to what before was strong:
Breaks out in wild irregular desires,
Disorder'd passions, and illicit fires;
Without, deforms the man, depraves within,
And makes the work of God the slave of sin.
But if Religion's bias rule the soul,
Then Sensibility exalts the whole;
Sheds its sweet sunshine on the moral part,
Nor wastes on fancy what should warm the heart.
Cold and inert the mental powers would lie,
Without this quick'ning spark of Deity.
To melt the rich materials from the mine,
To bid the mass of intellect refine,
To bend the firm, to animate the cold,
And heav'ns own image stamp on Nature's gold;
To give immortal mind its finest tone,
Oh, Sensibility! is all thy own.
This is th' eternal flame which lights and warms,
In song enchants us and in action charms.

'Tis this that makes the pensive strains of Gray*
Win to the open heart their easy way;
Makes the touch'd spirit glow with kindred fire,
When sweet Serena's poet wakes the lyre:
Makes Portland's face its brightest rapture wear,
When her large bounty smooths the bed of care:
'Tis this that breathes through Sevigne's fair page,
That nameless grace which sooths a second age;
'Tis this, whose charm the soul resistless seize,
And gives Boscawen half her power to please.
Yet why those terrors? Why that anxious care?
Since your last hope† the deathful war *will* dare?
Why dread that energy of soul which leads
To dang'rous glory by heroic deeds?
Why mourn to view his ardent soul aspire?
You fear the son because you knew the sire.
Hereditary valour you deplore,
And dread, yet wish to find one hero more.

* This is meant of the *Elegy in a Country Church yard*, of which exquisite poem *Sensibility* is perhaps the characteristic beauty.

† Viscount Falmouth, admiral Boscawen's only remaining son was then in America, and at the battle of Lexington.

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

A LEGENDARY TALE.

IN TWO PARTS.

Of them who, wrapt in earth so cold,
No more the smiling day shall view,
Should many a tender tale be told,
For many a tender thought is due.—*Langhorne.*

PART I.

O nostra Vita, eh'e si bella in vista!
Com' perde agevolmente in un momento,
Quel, eh'en molt' anni a grand pena s'acquista.—*Petrarca.*

There was a young and valiant knight,
Sir Eldred was his name,
And never did a worthier wight
The rank of knighthood claim.
Where gliding *Tay*, her stream sends forth,
To feed the neighbouring wood,
The ancient glory of the north,
Sir Eldred's castle stood.
The knight was rich as knight might be
In patrimonial wealth;
And rich in nature's gift was he,
In youth, and strength, and health.
He did not think, as some have thought,
Whom honour never crown'd.
The fame a father dearly bought,
Could make the son renown'd,
He better thought, a noble sire,
Who gallant deeds had done,
To deeds of hardihood should fire
A brave and gallant son.
The fairest ancestry on earth
Without desert is poor;
And ev'ry deed of former worth
Is but a claim for more.
Sir Eldred's heart was ever kind,
Alive to pity's call;
A crowd of virtues grac'd his mind,
He lov'd and felt for all.
When merit rais'd the sufferer's name,
He show'rd his bounty then;
And those who could not prove that claim,
He succour'd still as men.
But sacred truth the muse compels
His errors to impart;
And yet the muse reluctant tells
The faults of Eldred's heart.
Though mild and soft as infant love
His fond affections melt;
Though all that kindest spirits prove
Sir Eldred keenly felt:
Yet if the passions storm'd his soul,
By jealousy led on;
The fierce resentment scorn'd control,
And bore his virtues down,
Not Thule's waves so widely break
To drown the northern shore;
Not Etna's entrails fiercer shake,
Or Scythia's tempest roar.
As when in summer's sweetest day
To fan the fragrant morn,
The sighing breezes softly stray
O'er fields of ripen'd corn;
Sudden the lightning's blast descends,
Deforms the ravag'd fields;
At once the various ruin blends,
And all resistless yields.
But when, to clear his stormy breast,
The sun of reason shone,
And ebbing passions sunk to rest,
And show'd what rage had done:
O then what anguish he betray'd!
His shame how deep, how true!
He view'd the waste his rage had made,
And shudder'd at the view.
The meek-ey'd dawn, in saffron robe,
Proclaim'd the op'ning day,
Up rose the sun to gild the globe,
And hail the new-born May;
The birds their vernal notes repeat
And glad the thick'ning grove;
And feather'd partners fondly greet
With many a song of love:
When pious Eldred early rose
The Lord of all to hail;

Who life with all its gifts bestows,
Whose mercies never fail!
That done—he left his woodland glade,
And journey'd far away;
He lov'd to court the distant shade,
And through the lone vale stray.
Within the bosom of a wood,
By eireling hills embrae'd,
A little, modest mansion stood,
Built by the hand of taste;
While many a prouder eastle fell,
This safely did endure;
The house where guardian virtues dwell
Is saered and seeure.
Of eglantine an humble fenee
Around the mansion stood,
Whieh serv'd at once to eharm the sense,
And sereen an infant wood.
The wood reeeiv'd an added grace,
As pleas'd it bent to look,
And view'd its ever verdant face
Reflected in a brook:
The smallness of the stream did well
The master's fortunes show;
But little streams may serve to tell
The souree from whence they flow.
This mansion own'd an aged knight,
And sueh a man was he,
As heaven just shows to human sight,
To tell what man should be.
His youth in many a well-fought field
Was train'd betimes to war:
His bosom, like a well-worn shield,
Was grae'd with many a scar.
The vigour of a green old age
His reverend form did bear;
And yet, alas! the warrior-sage
Had drain'd the dregs of care:
And sorrow more than age ean break,
And wound its hapless prey,
'Twas sorrow furrow'd his firm eheek,
And turn'd his bright loeks gray.
One darling daughter sooth'd his eares,
A young and beauteous dame,
Sole comfort of his failing years,
And Birtha was her name.
Her heart a little saered shrine,
Where all the Virtues meet,
And holy Hope and Faith divine
Had elaim'd it for their seat.
She lov'd to raise her fragrant bower
Of wild and rustie taste,
And there she sereen'd eaeh fav'rite flower
From ev'ry ruder blast;
And not a shrub or plant was there
But did some moral yield;
For wisdom, by a father's eare,
Was found in ev'ry field.
The trees, whose foliage fell away,
And with the summer died,
He thought an image of decay
Might lecture human pride:
While fair perennial greens that stood,
And brav'd the wintry blast,
As types of the fair mind be view'd,
Which shall for ever last.
He taught her that the gaudiest flowers
Were seldom fragrant found,
But wasted soon their little powers,
Dropt useless on the ground:
While the sweet-seented rose shall last,
And still retain its power,
When life's imperfect day is past
And beauty's shorter hour.
And here the virgin lov'd to lead
Her inoffensive day,
And here she oft retir'd to read,
And oft retir'd to pray.
Embower'd, she grae'd the woodland shades,
From eourts and eities far,
The pride of Caledonian maids,
The peerless northern star.
As shines that bright and lucid star,
The glory of the night,
When beaming through the eloud.ess air
She sheds her silver light:
So Birtha shone!—But when she spoke
The muse herself was heard,
As on the ravish'd air she broke,
And thus her prayer preferr'd:
'O bless thy Birtha, Power Supreme
In whom I live and move,
And bless me most by blessing him,
Whom more than life I love.'
She starts to hear a stranger's voice,
And with a modest graee,
She lifts her meek eye in surprise,
And see's a stranger's faee:
The stranger lost in transport stood,
Bereft of voiee and power,
While she with equal wonder view'd
Sir Eldred of the bower.
The virgin blush whieh spreads her eheek,
With nature's purest dye,
And all those dazzling beams whieh break
Like morning from her eye—
He view'd them all, and as he view'd
Drank deeply of delight;
And still his raptur'd eye pursued
And feasted on the sight.
With silent wonder long they gaz'd,
And neither silenee broke;
At length the smother'd passion blaz'd,
Enamour'd Eldred spoke:
'O saered virtue, heav'nly power!
Thy wond'rous foree I feel:
I gaze, I tremble, I adore,
Yet die my love to tell.
My seorn has oft the dart repell'd
Which guileful beauty threw;
But goodness heard, and graee beheld,
Must every heart subdue.'
Quiek on the ground her eyes were cast,
And now as quiekly rais'd:—
Just then her father hap'ly past,
On whom she trembling gaz'd.
Good Ardolph's eye his Bertha meets
With glanees of delight;
And thus with eourteous speeeh he greets
The young and graeeful knight;
'O gallant youth, whoe'er thou art,
Right welcome to this place!
There's something rises at my heart
Which says I've seen that face.'
'Thou gen'rous knight,' the youth rejoin'd,
'Though little known to fame,
I trust I bear a grateful mind—
Sir Eldred is my name.'
'Sir Eldred?'—Ardolph loud exclaim'd
'Renown'd for worth and power?

For valour and for virtue fam'd,
Sir Eldred of the bower?
Now make me grateful, righteous heaven,
As thou art good to me,
Since to my aged eyes 'tis given
Sir Eldred's son to see!'
Then Ardolph caught him by the hand,
And gaz'd upon his face,
And to his aged bosom strain'd,
With many a kind embrace.
Again he view'd him o'er and o'er,
And doubted still the truth,
And ask'd what he had ask'd before,
Then thus addresst the youth:
'Come now beneath my roof, I pray,
Some needful rest to take,
And with us many a cheerful day,
Thy friendly sojourn make!
He enter'd at the gate straightway,
Some needful rest to take;
And with them many a cheerful day
Did friendly sojourn make.

PART II.

Once—in a social summer's walk,
The gaudy day was fled;
They cheated time with cheerful talk,
When thus Sir Ardolph said:
'Thy father was the firmest friend
That e'er my being blest;
And every virtue heaven could send,
Fast bound him to my breast.
Together did we learn to bear
The casque and ample shield;
Together learn in many a war
The deathful spear to wield.
To make our union still more dear,
We both were doom'd to prove,
What is most sweet and most severe
In heart dissolving love.
The daughter of a neighbouring knight
Did *my* fond heart engage;
And ne'er did heaven the virtues write
Upon a fairer page.
His bosom felt an equal wound,
Nor sigh'd we long in vain;
One summer's sun beheld us bound
In Hymen's holy chain.
Thou wast Sir Eldred's only child,
Thy father's darling joy;
On me a lovely daughter smil'd,
On me a blooming boy;
But man has woes, has clouds of care
That dim his star of life—
My arms receiv'd the little pair,
The earth's cold breast, my wife.
Forgive, thou gentle knight, forgive,
Fond foolish tears *will* flow;
One day like mine thy heart may heave,
And mourn its lot of wo.
But grant, kind heaven! thou ne'er may'st know
The pangs I now impart;
Nor even feel the parting blow
That rives a husband's heart.
Beside the blooming banks of *Tay*,
My angel's ashes sleep;
And wherefore should her Ardolph stay,
Except to watch and weep?
I bore my beauteous babes away
With many a gushing tear;
I left the blooming banks of *Tay*,
And brought my darlings here.
I watch'd my little household cares,
And formed their growing youth;
And fondly train'd their infant years
To piety and truth.'
'Thy blooming Birtha here I see,'
Sir Eldred straight rejoin'd;
'But why thy son is not with thee,
Resolve my doubting mind.'
When Birtha did the question hear,
She sigh'd, but could not speak;
And many a soft and silent tear
Stray'd down her damask cheek.
Then pass'd o'er good Sir Ardolph's face,
A cast of deadly pale;
But soon compos'd, with manly grace,
He thus renew'd his tale:
'For him my heart too much has bled;
For him, my darling son,
Has sorrow press'd my hoary head;
But heav'n's high will be done!'
Scarce eighteen winter's had revolv'd,
To crown the circling year,
Before my valiant boy resolv'd
The warrior's lance to bear.
Too high I priz'd my native land,
Too dear his fame I held,
T' oppose a parent's stern command,
And keep him from the field.
He left me—left his sister too,
Yet tears bedew'd his face—
What could a feeble old man do?
He burst from my embrace.
O thirst of glory, fatal flame!
O laurels dearly bought!
Yet sweet is death when earn'd with fame—
So virtuous Edwy thought.
Full manfully the brave boy strove,
Though pressing ranks oppose;
But weak the strongest arm must prove
Against an host of foes.
A deadly wound my son receives,
A spear assails his side:
Grief does not kill—for Ardolph lives
To tell that Edwy died.
His long-lov'd mother died again
In Edwy's parting groan;
I wept for her, yet wept in vain—
I wept for both in one.
I would have died—I sought to die,
But heaven restrain'd the thought,
And to my passion-clouded eye
My helpless Birtha brought.
When lo! array'd in robes of light,
A nymph celestial came.
She clear'd the mists that dimm'd my sight—
Religion was her name.
She prov'd the chastisement divine,
And bade me kiss the rod;
She taught this rebel heart of mine
Submission to its God.
Religion taught me to sustain
What nature bade me feel;
And piety reliev'd the pain
Which time can never heal.'
He ceas'd—with sorrow and delight
The tale Sir Eldred hears:
Then weeping cries—'Thou noble knight,

For thanks accept my tears.
O Ardolph, might I dare aspire
To claim so bright a boon!—
Good old Sir Eldred was my sire—
And thou hast lost a son.
And though I want a worthier plea
To urge so dear a cause;
Yet, let me to thy bosom be
What once thy Edwy was.
My trembling tongue its aid denies
For thou may'st disapprove;
Then read it in my ardent eyes,
Oh! read the tale of love.
Thy beauteous Birtha!'—'Gracious power!
How could I e'er repine,'
Cries Ardolph, 'since I see this hour?
Yes—Birtha shall be thine.'
A little transient gleam of red
Shot faintly o'er her face,
And ev'ry trembling feature spread
With sweet disorder'd grace.
The tender father kindly smil'd
With fulness of content;
And fondly ey'd his darling child,
Who, bashful, blush'd consent.
O then to paint the vast delight
That fill'd Sir Eldred's heart,
To tell the transports of the knight,
Would mock the Muse's art.
But ev'ry kind and gracious soul,
Where gentle passions dwell,
Will better far conceive the whole,
Than any muse can tell.
The more the knight his Birtha knew,
The more he priz'd the maid;
Some worth each day produc'd to view
Some grace each hour betray'd.
The virgin too was fond to charm
The dear accomplish'd youth;
His single breast she strove to warm,
And crown'd with love, his truth.
Unlike the dames of modern days,
Who *general* homage claim;
Who court the *universal* gaze,
And pant for *public* fame.
Then beauty but on merit smil'd,
Nor were her chaste smiles sold;
No venal father gave his child,
For grandeur, or for gold.
The ardour of young Eldred's flame
But ill could brook delay,
And oft he press'd the maid to name
A speedy nuptial day.
The fond impatience of his breast
'Twas all in vain to hide,
But she his eager suit represt
With modest maiden pride.
When oft Sir Eldred press'd the day
Which was to crown his truth,
The thoughtful sire would sigh and say,
'O happy state of youth!
It little recks the woes which wait
To scare it dreams of joy;
Nor thinks to-morrow's alter'd fate
May all those dreams destroy.
And though the flatterer Hope deceives,
And painted prospects shows;
Yet man, still cheated, still believes,
Till death the bright scene close.
So look'd *my* bride, so sweetly mild,
On me her beauty's slave;
But whilst she look'd, and whilst she smil'd
She sunk into the grave.
Yet, O forgive an old man's care,
Forgive a father's zeal;
Who fondly loves must greatly fear,
Who fears must greatly feel.
Once more in soft and sacred bands
Shall Love and Hymen meet;
To-morrow shall unite your hands,
And—be your bliss complete!'
The rising sun inflam'd the sky,
The golden orient blush'd;
But Birtha's cheeks a sweeter dye,
A brighter crimson flush'd.
The priest in milk-white vestments clad,
Perform'd the mystic rite;
Love lit the hallow'd torch that led
To Hymen's chaste delight.
How feeble language were to speak
Th' immeasurable joy,
That fir'd Sir Eldred's ardent cheek,
And triumph'd in his eye!
Sir Ardolph's pleasure stood confest,
A pleasure all his own;
The guarded pleasure of a breast
Which many a grief had known.
'Twas such a sober sense of joy
As angels well might keep
A joy chastis'd by piety,
A joy prepared to weep.
To recollect her scatter'd thought,
And shun the noon-tide hour,
The lovely bride in secret sought
The coolness of her bower.
Long she remain'd—th' enamour'd knight,
Impatient at her stay;
And all unfit to taste delight
When Birtha was away;
Betakes him to the secret bower;
His footsteps softly move;
Impell'd by ev'ry tender power,
He steals upon his love.
O, horror! horror! blasting sight!
He sees his Birtha's charms,
Reclin'd with melting, fond delight,
Within a stranger's arms.
Wild frenzy fires his frantic hand.
Distracted at the sight,
He flies to where the lovers stand;
And stabs the stranger knight.
'Die, traitor, die! thy guilty flames
Demand th' avenging steel!'—
'It is my brother,' she exclaims!
''Tis Edwy—Oh farewell!'
An aged peasant, Edwy's guide,
The good old Ardolph sought;
He told him that his bosom's pride,
His Edwy, he had brought.
O how the father's feelings melt!
How faint and how revive!
Just so the Hebrew patriarch felt,
To find his son alive.
'Let me behold my darling's face,
And bless him ere I die!'
Then with a swift and vigorous pace,
He to the bower did hie;
O sad reverse!—Sunk on the ground
His slaughter'd son he view'd;
And dying Birtha, close he found

In brother's blood imbru'd.
Cold, speechless, senseless, Eldred near,
Gaz'd on the dced he'd done;
Like the blank statue of *Despair*,
Or *Madness* grav'd in stone.
The father saw—so Jephthah stood,
So turn'd his wo-fraught eye,
When the dear, destin'd child he view'd
His zeal had doom'd to die.
He look'd the wo he could not speak,
And on the pale corse prest.
His wan discolour'd, dying cheek,
And silent sunk to rest.
Then Birtha faintly rais'd her eye,
Which long had ceas'd to stream.
On Eldred fix'd, with many a sigh,
Its dim departing beam.
The cold, cold dews of hastening death,
Upon her pale face stand;
And quick and short her failing breath,
And tremulous her hand.
The cold, cold dews of hastening death,
The dim departing eye,
The quiv'ring hand, the short quick breath,
He view'd—and did not die.
He saw her spirit mount in air,
Its kindred skies to seek!
His heart its anguish could not bear,
And yet it would not break.
The mournful muse forbears to tell
How wretched Eldred died;
She draws the Grecian* painter's veil,
The vast distress to hide.
Yet heaven's decrees are just and wise,
And man is born to bear:
Joy is the portion of the skies,
Beneath them all is care.
Yet blame not heav'n; 'tis erring man,
Who mars his own best joys;
Whose passions uncontroll'd, the plan
Of promis'd bliss destroys.
Had Eldred *paus'd* before the blow,
His hand had never err'd;
What guilt, what complicated wo,
His soul had then been spar'd!
The deadliest wound with which we bleed,
Our crimes inflict alone;
Man's *mercies* from God's hand proceed,
His *miseries* from his *own*.

* In the celebrated picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Timanthes having exhausted every image of grief in the bystanders, threw a veil over the face of the father, whose sorrow he was utterly unable to express. Plin. book xxxv.

THE BLEEDING ROCK:

OR

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A NYMPH INTO STONE

——— The annual wound allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, suppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded.—*Milton.*

Where beauteous *Belmont* rears her modest brow
To view *Sabrina's* silver wave below,
Liv'd young Ianthe, fair as beauty's queen;
She reign'd unrivall'd in the sylvan scene;
Hers every charm of symmetry and grace,
Which aids the triumph of the fairest face;
With all that softer elegance of mind,
By genius heighten'd, and by taste refin'd
Yet early was she doom'd the child of care,
For hapless love subdu'd th' ill-fated fair,
Ah! what avails each captivating grace,
The form enchanting, or the fairest face?
Or what each beauty of the heav'n-born mind,
The soul superior, or the taste refin'd?
Beauty but serves destruction to insure,
And *sense* to feel the pang it cannot cure.
Each neighb'ring youth aspir'd to gain her hand,
And many a suitor came from many a land:
But all in vain each neighb'ring youth aspir'd,
And distant suitors all in vain admir'd.
Averse to hear, yet fearful to offend,
The lover she refus'd she made a friend:
Her meek rejection wore so mild a face,
More like acceptance seem'd it, than disgrace.
Young Polydore, the pride of rural swains,
Was wont to visit *Belmont's* blooming plains.
Who has not heard how Polydore could throw
Th' unerring dart to wound the flying doo?
How leave the swiftest at the race behind,
How mount the courser, and outstrip the wind?
With melting sweetness, or with magic fire,
Breathe the soft flute, or sweep the well-strung lyre?
From that fam'd lyre no vulgar music sprung,
The Graces tun'd it, and Apollo strung.
Apollo too was once a shepherd swain,
And fed the flock, and grac'd the rustic plain:
He taught what charms to rural life belong,
The social sweetness, and the sylvan song;
He taught fair Wisdom in her grove to woo,
Her joys how precious, and her wants how few!
The savage herds in mute attention stood,
And ravish'd *Echo* fill'd the vocal wood;
The sacred sisters, stooping from their sphere,
Forgot their golden harps, intent to hear;
Till Heaven the scene survey'd with jealous eyes,
And Jove, in envy, call'd him to the skies.
Young Polydore was rich in large domains,
In smiling pastures, and in flow'ry plains;
With these, he boasted each exterior charm,
To win the prudent, and the cold to warm;

The fairest semblance of desert he bore,
And each fictitious mark of goodness wore;
Could act the tenderness he never felt,
In sorrow soften, and in anguish melt.
The sigh elaborate, the fraudful tear,
The joy dissembled, and the well feign'd fear,
All these were his; and his each treach'rous art,
That steals the guileless and unpractis'd heart.
Too soon he heard of fair Ianthe's fame,
'Twas each enamour'd shepherd's fav'rite theme;
Return'd the rising, and the setting sun,
The shepherd's fav'rite theme was never done.
They prais'd her wit, her worth, her shape, her air!
And even inferior beauties own'd her fair.
Such sweet perfection all his wonder moved:
He saw, admired, nay, fancied that he loved:
But Polydore no gen'rous passion knew,
Lost to all truth in feigning to be true.
No lasting tenderness could warm a heart,
Too vain to feel, too selfish to impart.
Cold as the snows of Rhodope descend,
And with the chilling wave of Hebrus blend;
So cold the breast where Vanity presides,
And the whole subject soul absorbs and guides.
Too well he knew to make his conquest sure,
Win her soft heart, yet keep his own secure.
So oft he told the well imagin'd tale,
So oft he swore—how should he *not* prevail?
The well-imagin'd tale the nymph believ'd;
Too unsuspecting not to be deceiv'd:
She lov'd the youth, she thought herself belov'd,
Nor blush'd to praise whom every maid approv'd.
The conquest once achiev'd, the brightest fair,
When conquer'd, was no longer worth his care:
When to the world her passion he could prove,
Vain of his pow'r, he jested at her love.
The perjur'd youth, from sad Ianthe far
To win fresh triumphs, wages cruel war.
With other nymphs behold the wand'rer rove,
And tell the story of Ianthe's love;
He mocks her easy faith, insults her wo,
Nor pities tears himself had taught to flow.
To sad Ianthe soon the tale was borne,
How Polydore to treach'ry added scorn.
And now her eyes' soft radiance 'gan to fail,
And now the crimson of her cheek grew pale;
The lily there in faded beauty shows
Its sickly empire o'er the vanquish'd rose.
Devouring Sorrow marks her for his prey,
And, slow and certain, mines his silent way.
Yet, as apace her ebbing life declin'd,
Increasing strength sustain'd her firmer mind.
'O had my heart been hard as his,' she cried,
'An hapless victim thus I had not died:
If there be gods, and gods there surely are,
Insulted virtue doubtless is their care.
Then hasten, righteous Powers; my tedious fate,
Shorten my woes, and end my mortal date:
Quick let your power transform this failing frame,
Let me be any thing but what I am!
And since the cruel woes I'm doom'd to feel,
Proceed, alas! from having lov'd too well:
Grant me some form where love can have no part,
No human weakness reach my guarded heart;
Where no soft touch of passion can be felt,
No fond affection this weak bosom melt.
If Pity has not left your blest abodes,
Change me to flinty adamant, ye gods!
To hardest rock, or monumental stone,
So may I know no more the pangs I've known;
So shall I thus no farther torments prove,
Nor taunting rivals say she died for love:
For sure, if aught can aggravate our wo,
'Tis the feign'd pity of a prosp'rous foe.'
Thus pray'd the nymph, and straight the Pow'rs addrest,
Accord the weeping suppliant's sad request.
Then strange to tell! if rural folks say true,
To harden'd rock the stiff'ning damsel grew,
No more her shapeless features can be known,
Stone is her body, and her limbs are stone;
The growing rock invades her beauteous face,
And quickly petrifies each living grace;
The stone, her stature nor her shape retains,
The nymph is vanish'd, but the rock remains.
No vestige now of human shape appears.
No cheeks for blushes, and no eyes for tears:
Yet—strange the marvels poets can impart!
Unchang'd, unchill'd, remain'd the glowing heart;
Its vital spirits destin'd still to keep,
It scorn'd to mingle with the marble heap.
When babbling Fame the wondrous tidings bore,
Grief seiz'd the soul of perjur'd Polydore;
And now the falsehood of his soul appears,
And now his broken vows assail his ears.
Appall'd his smitten fancy seems to view
The nymph so lovely, and the friend so true.
For since her absence, all the virgin train,
His admiration sought to win in vain.
Though not to keep him ev'n Ianthe knew
From vanity alone his falsehood grew:
O let the youthful heart, thus warn'd beware,
Of vanity, how deep, how wide the snare;
That half the mischiefs youth and beauty know,
From Vanity's exhaustless fountain flow.
Now deep remorse deprives his soul of rest:
And deep compunction wounds his guilty breast:
Then to the fatal spot in haste he flew,
Eager some vestige of the maid to view,
The shapeless rock he mark'd, but found no trace
Of lost Ianthe's form, Ianthe's face.
He fix'd his streaming eyes upon the stone,
'And take sweet maid,' he cried, 'my parting groan;
Since we are doom'd thus terribly to part,
No other nymph shall ever share my heart;
Thus only I'm absolv'd'—he rashly cried,
Then plung'd a deadly poinard in his side!
Fainting, the steel he grasp'd, and as he fell
The weapon pierc'd the rock he lov'd so well;
The guiltless steel assail'd the living part,
And stabb'd the vital, vulnerable heart.
And though the rocky mass was pale before,
Behold it ting'd with ruddy streams of gore!
The life-blood issuing from the wounded stone,
Blends with the crimson current of his own,
From Polydore's fresh wound it flow'd in part,
But chief emitted from Ianthe's heart.
And though revolving ages since have past,
The meeting torrents undiminish'd last;
Still gushes out the sanguine stream amain,
The standing wonder of the stranger swain.
Now once a year, so rustic records tell,

When o'er the heath resounds the midnight bell;
On eve of midsummer, that foe to sleep,
What time young maids their annual vigils keep,
The tell-tale shrub,* fresh gather'd to declare
The swains who false, from those who constant are;
When ghosts in clanking chains the church-yard walk,
And to the wond'ring ear of fancy talk:
When the scar'd maid steals trembling thro' the grove,
To kiss the grave of him who died for love;
When, with long watchings, Care at length oppprest,
Steals broken pauses of uncertain rest;
Nay, Grief short snatches of repose can take,
And nothing but Despair is quite awake;
Then, at that hour, so still, so full of fear,
When all things horrible to thought appear,
Is perjur'd Polydore observ'd to rove
A ghastly spectre through the gloomy grove;
Then to the rock, the *Bleeding-rock* repair,
Where, sadly sighing it dissolves to air.

* Midsummer-men, consulted as oracular by village maids.

Still when the hours of solemn rites return,
The village train in sad procession mourn;
Pluck ev'ry weed which might the spot disgrace,
And plant the fairest field flowers in their place.
Around no noxious plant, or flow'ret grows,
But the first daffodil, and earliest rose;
The snow-drop spreads its whitest blossom here,
And golden cowslips grace the vernal year:
Here the pale primrose takes a fairer hue,
And ev'ry violet boasts a brighter blue.
Here builds the wood-lark, here the faithful dove
Laments his lost, or woos his living love.
Secure from harm is ev'ry hallow'd nest,
The spot is sacred where true lovers rest.
To guard the rock from each malignant sprite,
A troop of guardian spirits watch by night;
Aloft in air each takes his little stand,
The neighb'ring hill is hence call'd *Fairy Land.**

* By contraction, *Failand*, a hill well known in Somersetshire: not far from this is *The Bleeding Rock*, from which constantly issues a crimson current. A desire to account for this appearance, gave rise to a whimsical conversation, which produced these slight verses.

ODE.

FROM H. M. AT BRISTOL, TO DRAGON, MR. GARRICK'S HOUSE DOG, AT HAMPTON.

I. Dragon! since lyrics are the mode,
To thee I dedicate my ode,
And reason good I plead:
Are those who cannot write, to blame
To draw their hopes of future fame,
From those who cannot read?
II. O could I like that nameless wight,*
Find the choice minute when to write,
The *mollia tempora fandi!*
Like his, my muse should learn to whistle
A true *heroical epistle*,
In strains which ne'er can die.
III. Father of lyrics, tuneful Horace!
Can thy great shade do nothing for us
To mend the British lyre?
Our luckless bards have broke the strings,
Seiz'd the scar'd muses, pluck'd their wings,
And put out all their fire.†
IV. Dragon! thou tyrant of the yard,
Great namesake of that furious guard
That watch'd the fruits Hesperian!
Thy choicer treasures safely keep,
Nor snatch one moment's guilty sleep,
Fidelity's criterion.
V. O Dragon! change with me thy fate,
To give me up thy place and state,
And I will give thee mine:
I, left to think, and thou to feed!
My mind enlarg'd, thy body freed,
How blest *my* lot and *thine!*
VI. Then shalt thou scent the rich regale
Of turtle and diluting ale,
Nay, share the sav'ry bit;
And see, what thou hast never seen,
For thou hast but at Hampton been,
A feast devoid of wit.
VII. Oft shalt thou snuff the smoking venison,
Devour'd *alone*, by hungry denizen,
So fresh, thoul't long to tear it;
Though Flaccus* tells a diff'rent tale
Of social souls who chose it stale,
Because their *friends* should share it.
VIII. And then on me what joys would wait,
Were I the guardian of thy gate,
How useless bolt and latch!
How vain were locks, and bars how vain,
To shield from harm the household train
Whom I, from love, would watch!
IX. Not that 'twould crown with joy my life
That Bowden,† or that Bowden's wife,
Brought me my daily pickings:
Though she, accelerating fate,
Decrees the scanty moral date
Of turkeys and of chickens!
X. Though fir'd with innocent ambition,
Bowden, great Nature's rhetorician,
More flow'rs than Burke produces;
And though he 's skill'd more roots to find,
Than ever stock'd an Hebrew's mind,
And knows their various uses.
XI. I'd get my master's ways by rote,
Ne'er would I bark at ragged coat,
Nor tear the tatter'd sinner;
Like him I'd love the dog of merit
Caress the cur of broken spirit,
And give them all a dinner.
XII. Nor let me pair his blue-ey'd dame
With Venus' or Minerva's name,

* See the admirable epistle to sir William Chambers.

† A profusion of odes had appeared about this time, which strikingly violated all the rules of lyrical composition.

* Hor. lib. ii. Sat. 2.

† The gardener and poultry woman at Hampton.

One warrior, one coquet;
No, Pallas and the queen of Beauty
Shunn'd, or betray'd that nuptial duty,
Which *she* so high has set.
XIII. Whene'er I heard the rattling coach
Proclaim their long-desir'd approach,
How would I haste to greet 'em!
Nor ever feel I wore a chain,
Till, starting, I perceiv'd with pain
I could not fly to meet 'em!
XIV. The master loves his sylvan shades,
Here, with the nine melodious maids,
His choicest hours are spent:
Yet shall I hear some wittling cry,
(Such wittling from my presence fly!)
'Garrick will soon repent:
XV. 'Again you'll see him, never fear;
Some half a dozen times a year
He still will charm the age;
Accustom'd long to be admir'd,
Of shades and streams he'll soon be tir'd,
And languish for the stage.'
XVI. Peace! To his solitude he bears
The full-blown fame of thirty years;
He bears a nation's praise;
He bears his lib'ral, polish'd mind,
His worth, his wit, his sense refin'd
He bears his well-earn'd bays.
XVII. When warm admirers drop a tear
Because this sun has left his sphere,
And set before his time;
I who have felt and lov'd his rays,
What they condemn will loudly praise,
And call the deed sublime.
XVIII. How wise long-pamper'd with applause,
To make a voluntary pause
And lay his laurels down!
Boldly repelling each strong claim,
To dare assert to Wealth and Fame,
'Enough of both I've known.'
XIX. How wise! a short retreat to steal,
The vanity of life to feel,
And from its cares to fly:
To act one calm, domestic scene,
Earth's bustle, and the grave between,
Retire, and learn to die!

EPITAPHS.

ON THE REVEREND MR. PENROSE,

Thirty-two years Vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall.

If social manners, if the gentlest mind,
If zeal for God, and love for human kind,
If all the charities which life endear,
May claim affection, or demand a tear,
Then o'er Penrose's venerable urn
Domestic love may weep, and friendship mourn.
The path of duty still, untir'd, he trod,
He walk'd in safety, for he walk'd with God!
When past the power of precept and of pray'r,
Yet still his flock remain'd the shepherd's care;
Their wants still kindly watchful to supply,
He taught his best, last lesson, how to die!

ON MRS. BLANFORD.

Meek shade, farewell! go seek that quiet shore
Where sin shall vex, and sorrow wound no more;
Thy lowly worth obtains that final bliss,
Which pride disdains to seek, and wit may miss.
That path thou'st found which science cannot teach,
But faith and goodness never fail to reach:
Then share the joy the words of life impart,
The Vision promis'd to the *pure in heart.*

ON MRS. LITTLE,

In Redcliff Church, England.

O could this verse her fair example spread,
And teach the living while it prais'd the dead!
Then, reader! should it speak her hope divine,
Not to record her faith, but strengthen thine;
Then should her ev'ry virtue stand confest,
Till ev'ry virtue kindle in thy breast.
But, if thou slight the monitory strain,
And she has liv'd, to thee at least, in vain;
Yet let her death, an awful lesson give,
The dying Christian speaks to all that live.
Enough for her that here her ashes rest,
Till God's own plaudit shall her worth attest.

ON GENERAL LAWRENCE,

Memorable for his conquests in India, and for his clemency to the vanquished.

On a Monument erected by Sir Robert Palk.

Born to command, to conquer, and to spare,
As mercy mild, yet terrible as war,
Here Lawrence rests in death; while living fame
From Thames to Ganges wafts his honour'd name.
To him this frail memorial Friendship rears,
Whose noblest monument's a nation's tears;
Whose deeds on fairer columns stand engrav'd,
In provinces preserv'd and cities sav'd.

TO THE MEMORY OF

MRS. ELIZABETH IVES,

Aged Ninety-one, of Northampton.

Her pious and useful Life,
was extended to an honourable old age,
and closed by an exemplary Death,
Her *Charity* had its source
In *Religion:*
Her love of her neighbour
was the genuine effect
of her love of God:
Her *Resignation*
was the Fruit of her *Faith,*
and she died in *Hope*
because she had lived
A Christian.

ON THE REVEREND MR. HUNTER,

Who receiv'd a degree from the University of Oxford for his work against Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy.

Go, happy spirit, seek that blissful land
Where zealous Michael leads the glorious band
Of those who fought for truth; blest spirit, go
And perfect all the good begun below:
Go, hear applauding saints, delighted, tell
How vanquish'd Falsehood, at thy bidding fell!
Blest in that heav'n whose paths thy virtue sought;
Blest in that God whose cause thou well hast fought;
O let thy honour'd shade *his* care approve,
Who this memorial rears of filial love:
A son, whose father, living, was his pride;
A son who mourns that such a father died.

ON C. DICEY, Esq.

In Claybrook Church, Leicestershire.

O THOU, or friend or stranger, who shall tread
These solemn mansions of the silent dead!
Think, when this record to inquiring eyes,
No more shall tell the spot where Dicey lies;
When this frail marble, faithless to its trust,
Mould'ring itself, resigns its moulder'd dust;
When time shall fail, and Nature's self decay,
And earth, and sun, and skies dissolve away;
Thy soul, this consummation shall survive,
Defy the wreck, and but *begin* to live.
This truth, long slighted, let these ashes teach,
Though cold, instruct you, and though silent preach:
O pause! reflect, repent, resolve, amend!
Life has no length, eternity no end!

ON A YOUNG LADY.

Go, peaceful shade! exchange for sin and care
The glorious palm which patient suff'rers wear!
Go, take the meed victorious meekness gains,
Go, wear the crown triumphant faith obtains.
Those silent graces which the good conceal,
The day of dread disclosure shall reveal;
Then shall thy mild, retiring virtues rise,
And God, both judge and witness, give the prize.

INSCRIPTION ON A CENOTAPH IN A GARDEN.

ERECTED TO A DECEASED FRIEND.

Ye lib'ral souls who rev'rence Friendship's name,
Who boast her blessings, and who feel her flame;
Oh! if from early youth one friend you've lov'd,
Whom warm affection chose, and taste approv'd;
If you have known what anguish rends the heart,
When such, so known, so lov'd, for ever part;
Approach—For you the mourner rears this stone,
To sooth your sorrows, and record his own.

ON THE REVEREND MR. LOVE.

In the Cathedral, at Bristol.

WHEN worthless grandeur fills th' embellish'd urn.
No poignant grief attends the sable bier:
But when distinguish'd excellence we mourn,
Deep is the sorrow, genuine is the tear.
Stranger! should'st thou approach this awful shrine,
The merits of the honour'd dead to seek,
The friend, the son, the Christian, the divine,
Let those who knew him, those who lov'd him speak.
Oh let them in some pause of anguish say,
What zeal inflam'd, what faith enlarg'd his breast!
How glad the unfetter'd spirit wing'd its way
From earth to heav'n, from blessing to be blest!

ON THE REVEREND

SIR JAMES STONHOUSE, BART. M. D.

In the Chapel at the Hot-Wells, Bristol.

HERE rest awhile, in happier climes to shine,
The orator, physician, and divine:
'Twas his, like Luke, the double task to fill,
To heal the nat'ral and the moral ill.
You, whose awaken'd hearts his labours blest,
Where ev'ry truth, by ev'ry grace was drest;
Oh! let your lives evince that still you feel
Th' effective influence of his fervent zeal.
One spirit rescued from eternal wo
Were nobler fame than marble can bestow;
That lasting monument will mock decay
And stand, triumphant, at the final day.

ON SARAH STONHOUSE,

Second wife of the Rev. Sir James Stonhouse, Bart.

COME resignation! wipe the human tear,
Domestic anguish drops o'er Virtue's bier;
Bid selfish sorrow hush the fond complaint,
Nor, from the God she lov'd, detain the saint,
Truth, meekness, patience, honour'd shade were thine;
And holy hope, and charity divine:
Though these thy forfeit being could not save,
Thy faith subdu'd the terrors of the grave.
Oh! if thy *living* excellence could teach,
Death has a loftier emphasis of speech:
Let death thy strongest lesson then impart;
And write *prepare to die*, on ev'ry heart.

THE FOOLISH TRAVELLER:

OR, A GOOD INN IS A BAD HOME.

THERE was a prince of high degree,
As great and good as prince could be;
Much pow'r and wealth were in his hand,
With lands and lordships at command,
One son, a fav'rite son, he had,
An idle thoughtless kind of lad;
Whom, spite of all his follies past
He meant to make his heir at last.

The son escap'd to foreign lands,
And broke his gracious sire's commands;
Far, as he fancied, from his sight,
In each low joy he took delight.
The youth, detesting peace and quiet,
Indulg'd in vice, expense, and riot;
Of each wild pleasure rashly tasted,
Till health declined, and substance wasted
The tender sire, to pity prone,
Promis'd to pardon what was done;
And, would he certain terms fulfil
He should receive a kingdom still.
The youth the *pardon* little minded,
So much his sottish soul was blinded;
But though he mourn'd no past transgression,
He lik'd the future rich possession.
He lik'd the kingdom when obtain'd,
But not the terms on which 'twas gain'd;
He hated pain and self-denial,
Chose the reward, but shunn'd the trial.
He knew his father's power how great,
How glorious too the promis'd state!
At length resolves no more to roam
But straight to seek his father's home.
His sire had sent a friend to say,
He must be cautious on his way;
Told him what road he must pursue,
And always keep his home in view.
The thoughtless youth set out indeed,
But soon he slacken'd in his speed;
For ev'ry trifle by the way
Sedue'd his idle heart astray.
By ev'ry casual impulse sway'd,
On ev'ry slight pretence he stay'd;
To each, to all, his passions bend,
He quite forgets his journey's end.
For ev'ry sport, for ev'ry song,
He halted as he pass'd along;
Caught by each idle sight he saw,
He'd loiter e'en to pick a straw.
Whate'er was present seiz'd his soul,
A feast, a show, a brimming bowl;
Contented with this vulgar lot,
His father's house he quite forgot.
Those slight refreshments by the way,
Which were but meant his strength to stay,
So sunk his soul in sloth and sin,
He look'd no farther than his inn.
His father's friend would oft appear
And sound the *promise* in his ear;
Oft would he rouse him, 'Sluggard come!
This is thy inn, and not thy home.'
Displeas'd he answers, 'Come what will,
Of present bliss I'll take my fill;
In vain you plead, in vain I hear,
Those joys are distant, these are near.'
Thus perish'd, lost to worth and truth,
In sight of home this hapless youth;
While beggars, foreigners, and poor,
Enjoy'd the father's boundless store.

APPLICATION.

My fable, reader, speaks to thee,
In God this bounteous father see;
And in his thoughtless offspring trace,
The sinful, wayward, human race.
The friend, the generous father sent
To rouse, and to reclaim him, meant
The faithful minister you'll find,
Who calls the wand'ring, warns the blind.
Reader, awake! this youth you blame,
Are not *you* doing just the same?
Mindless your comforts are but given
To help you on your way to heav'n.
The pleasures which beguile the road,
The flow'rs with which your path is strew'd
To these your whole desires you bend
And quite forget your journey's end.
The meanest toys your soul entice,
A feast, a song, a game at dice;
Charm'd with your present paltry lot,
Eternity is quite forgot.
Then listen to a warning friend,
Who bids you mind your journey's end;
A wand'ring pilgrim here you roam;
This world's your *inn*, the next your *home*.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY CONQUERED:

OR, LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.

IN THE MANNER OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

THE OBJECTOR,

I. Each man who lives the Scriptures prove,
Must as himself his neighbour love;
But though the precept 's full of beauty,
'Tis an impracticable duty:
I'll prove how hard it is to find
A lover of this wond'rous kind.
II. Who loves himself to great excess,
You'll grant *must* love his neighbour less;
When self engrosses all the heart
How can another have a part?
Then if self-love most men enthral,
A neighbour's share is none at all.
III. Say, can the man who hoards up pelf
E'er love his neighbour as himself?
For if he did, would he not labour
To hoard a little for his neighbour?
Then tell me, friend, can hoarding elves
E'er love their neighbour as themselves?
IV. The man whose heart is bent on *pleasure*
Small love will to his neighbour measure:
Who solely studies his own good,
Can't love another if he would.
Then how can pleasure-hunting elves
E'er love their neighbour as themselves!
V. Can he whom sloth and loitering please
E'er love his neighbour like his *ease*?
Or he who feels ambition's flame
Loves he his neighbour like his *fame*?
Such lazy, or such soaring elves
Can't love their neighbour as themselves.
VI. He, whose gross appetites enslave him,
Who spends or feasts the wealth God gave him;
Full, pamper'd, gorg'd at ev'ry meal,
He *cannot* for the empty feel.
How can such *gormandizing* elves
E'er love their neighbour as themselves?

VII. Then since the man who lusts for *gold*,
Since he who is to *pleasure* sold;
Who soars in *pride*, or sinks in *ease*,
His neighbour will not serve or please;
Where shall we hope the man to find
To fill this great command inclin'd?
VIII. I dare not blame God's holy word,
Nor censure Scripture as absurd;
But sure the rule 's of no avail
If plac'd so high that all must fail;
And 'tis *impossible* to prove
That *any* can his neighbour love.

THE ANSWERER.

IX. Yes, such there are of heav'nly mould,
Unwarp'd by pleasure, ease, or gold;
He who fulfils the nobler part
By loving God with all his heart,
He, only he, the Scriptures prove,
Can, as himself, his *neighbour* love.
X. Then join, to make a perfect plan,
The love of God to love of man;
Your heart in union both must bring,
This is the stream, and that the spring;
This done, no more in vain you'll labour,
A Christian can't *but* love his neighbour.
XI. If then the rule 's too hard to please ye,
Turn Christian, and you'll find it easy.
'Still, 'tis impossible.' you'll cry,
'In vain shall feeble nature try.'
'Tis true; but know a Christian is a creature
Who does things quite impossible to nature.

INSCRIPTION

IN A BEAUTIFUL RETREAT, CALLED FAIRY BOWER.

Airy spirits, you who love
Cooling bow'r, or shady grove:
Streams that murmur as they flow,
Zephyrs bland that softly blow;
Babbling echo, or the tale
Of the love-lorn nightingale;
Hither airy spirits, come,
This is your peculiar home,
If you love a verdant glade,
If you love a noon-tide shade,
Hither, sylphs and fairies fly,
Unobserv'd of earthly eye.
Come, and wander ev'ry night,
By the moon-beam's glimm'ring light
And again at early day
Brush the silver dews away.
Mark where first the daisies blow,
Where the bluest violets grow;
Where the sweetest linnet sings,
Where the earliest cowslip springs;
Where the largest acorn lies.
Precious in a fairy's eyes;
Sylphs, though unconfin'd to place,
Love to fill an acorn's space.
Come, and mark within what bush
Builds the blackbird or the thrush;
Great his joy who first espies,
Greater his who spares the prize!
Come, and watch the hallow'd bow'r,
Chase the insect from the flow'r;
Little offices like these,
Gentle souls and fairies please.
Mortals! form'd of grosser clay,
From our haunts keep far away;
Or, if you should dare appear,
See that you from vice are clear.
Folly's minion, Fashion's fool,
Mad Ambition's restless tool!
Slave of passion, slave of pow'r,
Fly, ah fly! this tranquil bow'r!
Son of Av'rice, soul of frost,
Wretch! of Heav'n abhorred the most,
Learn to pity others' wants,
Or avoid these hallow'd haunts.
Eye unconscious of a tear,
When Afflictions train appear;
Heart that never heav'd a sigh,
For another, come not nigh.
But, ye darling sons of Heav'n,
Giving freely what was giv'n;
You, whose lib'ral hand dispense
The blessings of benevolence:
You, who wipe the tearful eye,
You, who stop the rising sigh;
You, whose souls have understood
The luxury of doing good—
Come, ye happy virtuous few,
Open is my bow'r to you;
You, these mossy banks may press,
You, each guardian fay shall bless.

THE BAD BARGAIN:

OR, THE WORLD SET UP TO SALE.

The Devil, as the Scriptures show,
Tempts sinful mortals high and low;
And acting well his various part,
Suits every bribe to every heart:
See where the prince of darkness stands
With baits for souls in both his hands.
To one he offers empires whole,
And gives a sceptre for a soul;
To one, he freely gives in barter,
A peerage, or a star and garter;
To one he pays polite attention,
And begs him just to take a pension.
Some are so fir'd with love of fame,
He bribes them by an empty name;
For fame they toil, they preach, they write,
Give alms, build hospitals or fight;
For human praise renounce salvation,
And sell their souls for reputation.
But the great gift, the mighty bribe,
Which Satan pours amid the tribe,
Which millions seize with eager haste,
And all desire at least to taste,

Is—plodding reader!—what d'ye think?
Alas!—tis money—money—chink!
Round the wide world the tempter flies,
Presents to view the glittering prize;
See how he hastes from shore to shore,
And how the nations all adore:
Souls flock by thousands to be sold,
Smit with the fond desire of gold.
See, at yon needy tradesman's shop,
The universal tempter stop;
'Would'st thou,' he cries, 'increase thy treasures,
Use lighter weights and scantier measures,
Thus thou shalt thrive:' the trader's willing,
And sells his soul to get a shilling.
Next Satan to a farmer hies,
'I scorn to cheat,' the farmer cries:
Yet still his heart on wealth is bent,
And so the Devil is content;
Now markets rise, and riches roll,
And Satan quite secures his soul.
Mark next yon cheerful youth so jolly.
So fond of laughter and of folly;
He hates a stingy griping fellow,
But gets each day a little mellow;
To Satan too he sells his soul
In barter for a flowing howl.
But mark again yon lass a spinning,
See how the tempter is beginning:
Some beau presents a top-knot nice,
She grants her virtue as the price;
A slave to vanity's controul,
She, for a riband, sells her soul!
Thus Satan tries each different state:
With mighty bribes he tempts the great;
The poor, with equal force he plies,
But wins them with a humbler prize:
Has gentler arts for young beginners,
And fouler sins for older sinners.
Oft too he cheats our mortal eyes,
For Satan father is of lies;
A thousand swindling tricks he plays us,
And promises, but never pays us;
Thus we poor fools are strangely caught,
And find we've sold our souls for nought.
Nay, oft, with quite a juggler's art,
He bids the proffer'd gift depart;
Sets some gay joy before our face,
Then claps a trouble in its place;
Turns up some loss for promis'd gain,
And conjures pleasure into pain.
Be wise then, oh! ye worldly tribe,
Nor sell your conscience for a bribe;
When Satan tempts you to begin,
Resist him, and refuse to sin:
Bad is the bargain on the whole,
To gain the world and lose the soul!

BALLADS.

ROBERT AND RICHARD.

OR, THE GHOST OF POOR MOLLY,

Who was drowned in Richard's Mill-pond.

Tune—'Collin's Mulberry Tree.'

Quoth Richard to Bob, 'Let things go as they will,
Of pleasure and fun I will still have my fill;
In frolic and mirth I see nothing amiss,
And though I get tipsy, *what harm is in this?*
For e'en Solomon says, and I vow he says truth,
Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth.'
'I'm glad,' answered Bob, 'you're of Solomon's creed,
But I beg, if you quote him, you'll please to proceed;
'For God (as the wise man continues to sing)
Thy soul into judgment for all this will bring.
Thus a man may get plung'd in a woful abyss,
By choosing to say, *Pray what harm is in this?*'
'Come, come,' says gay Richard, 'don't grudge me a cup,
I'm resolv'd, while I'm able, I'll still keep it up;
Let old gray-beard's deny that in frolic there's bliss,
I'll game, love, and drink—*and what harm is in this?*'
Says Robert, 'I grant if you live for to-day,
You may game, love, and drink, and may frolic away;
But then, my dear Dick, I again must contend,
That the Wise Man has bid us—*Remember the end!*'
Says Richard, 'When sickness or peevish old age
Shall advance to dismiss me from life's merry stage;
Repentance just then, boy, may not be amiss,
But while young I'll be jolly, *what harm is in this?*'
They parted; and Richard his pastimes begun,
'Twas Richard the jovial, the soul of all fun;
Each dancing bout, drinking bout, Dick would attend
And he sung and he swore, *nor once thought of the end.*
Young Molly he courted, the pride of the plain,
He promis'd her marriage, but promis'd in vain;
She trusted his vows, but she soon was undone,
And when she lamented, he thought it good fun.
Thus scorn'd by her Richard, sad Molly run wild,
And roam'd through the woods with her destitute child;
'Till Molly and Molly's poor baby were found,
One evening, in Richard's own mill-pond both drown'd.
Then his conscience grew troubled by night and by day,
But its clamour he drown'd in more drink and more play;
Still Robert exhorted, and like a true friend
He warn'd him and pray'd him *to think on the end!*
Now disturb'd in his dreams, poor Molly each night
With her babe stood before him, how sad was the sight!
O how ghastly she look'd as she bade him attend,
And so awfully told him, '*Remember the end.*'

She talk'd of the woes and unquenchable fire
Which await the licentious, the drunkard, and liar: [beware,
How he ruin'd more maidens, she bade him
Then she wept, and she groan'd, and she vanish'd in air.
Now beggar'd by gaming, distemper'd by drink,
Death star'd in his face, yet he dar'd not to think;
Desparing of mercy, despising all truth,
He dy'd of old age in the prime of his youth.
On his tomb-stone, good Robert, these verses engrav'd, [and be saved:
Which he hop'd some gay fellow might read

THE EPITAPH.

HERE lies a poor youth, who call'd drinking his bliss. [*this?*
And was ruin'd by saying, *what harm is in*
Let each passer by to his error attend,
And learn of poor Dick to *remember the end!*

THE CARPENTER:

Or, the Danger of Evil Company.

THERE was a young west countryman,
A carpenter by trade,
A skilful wheelright too was he,
And few such wagons made.
No man a tighter barn could build,
Throughout his native town;
Through many a village round was he
The best of workmen known,
His father left him what he had,
In sooth it was enough,
His shining pewter, pots of brass,
And all his household stuff.
A little cottage too he had,
For case and comfort plann'd;
And that he might not lack for aught,
An acre of good land.
A pleasant orchard too there was
Before his cottage door;
Of cider and of corn likewise,
He had a little store.
Active and healthy, stout and young
No business wanted he;
Now tell me, reader, if you can;
What man more blest could be?
To make his comfort quite complete;
He had a faithful wife;
Frugal, and neat, and good was she,
The blessing of his life.
Where is the lord, or where the squire,
Had greater cause to praise
The goodness of that bounteous hand
Which blest his prosp'rous days?
Each night when he return'd from work,
His wife so meek and mild,
His little supper gladly dress'd,
While he caress'd his child,
One blooming babe was all he had,
His only darling dear,
The object of their equal love,
The solace of their care.
O what could ruin such a life,
And spoil so fair a lot?
O what could change so kind a heart,
And ev'ry virtue blot?
With grief the cause I must relate,
The dismal cause reveal;
'Twas EVIL COMPANY and DRINK,
The source of ev'ry ill.
A cooper came to live hard by,
Who did his fancy please;
An idle rambling man was he,
Who oft had cross'd the seas,
This man could tell a merry tale,
And sing a merry song;
And those who heard him sing or talk,
Ne'er thought the ev'ning long.
But vain and vicious was the song,
And wicked was the tale;
And ev'ry pause he always fill'd,
With cider, gin, or ale.
Our carpenter delighted much
To hear the cooper talk;
And with him to the alehouse oft,
Would take his evening walk.
At first he did not care to drink,
But only lik'd the fun;
But soon he from the cooper learnt,
The same sad course to run,
He said the cooper's company
Was all for which he car'd,
But soon he drank as much as he,
To swear like him soon dar'd.
His hammer now neglected lay,
For work he little car'd;
Half finish'd wheels and broken tools,
Were strew'd about his yard.
To get him to attend his work,
No prayers could now prevail,
His hatchet and his plane forgot,
He never drove a nail.
His cheerful ev'nings now no more
With peace and plenty smil'd;
No more he sought his pleasing wife,
Nor hugg'd his smiling child.
For not his drunken nights alone,
Were with the cooper past,
His days were at the Angel spent,
And still he stay'd the last.
No handsome Sunday suit was left,
Nor decent Holland shirt:
No nose-gay mark'd the sabbath-morn;
But all was rags and dirt.
No more his church he did frequent,
A symptom ever sad:
Where once the Sunday is mispent,
The week days must be bad.
The cottage mortgag'd for its worth;
The fav'rite orchard sold;
He soon began to feel the effects
Of hunger and of cold.
The pewter dishes one by one
Were pawn'd, till none were left;
A wife and babe at home remain'd
Of ev'ry help bereft.
By chance he call'd at home one night,
And in a surley mood,
He bade his weeping wife to get
Immediately some food.
His empty cupboard well he knew
Must needs be bare of bread;
No rasher on the rack he saw,
Whence could he then be fed!
His wife* a piteous sigh did heave,

* See Berquin's Gardener.

And then before him laid,
A basket cover'd with a cloth,
But not a word she said.
Then to her husband gave a knife,
With many a silent tear,
In haste he tore the cover off,
And saw his child lie there.
'There lies thy babe,' the mother said,
'Oppress'd with famine sore'
O kill us both—'twere kinder far
We could not suffer more.
The carpenter struck to the heart,
Fell on his knees straightway,
He wrung his hands—confess'd his sins,
And did both weep and pray.
From that same hour the cooper more
He never would behold;
Nor would he to the ale house go;
Had it been pav'd with gold.
His wife forgave him all the past;
And sooth'd his sorrowing mind,
And much he griev'd that e'er he wrong'd
The worthiest of her kind.
By lab'ring hard, and working late,
By industry and pains,
His cottage was at length redeem'd,
And sav'd were all his gains.
His Sundays now at church were spent,
His home was his delight;
The following verse himself he made,
And read it ev'ry night.

The drunkard murders child and wife,
Nor matters it a pin,
Whether he stabs them with his knife,
Or starves them with his gin.

THE RIOT:

OR, HALF A LOAF IS BETTER THAN NO BREAD.

In a Dialogue between Jack Anvil and Tom Hod.

To the tune of 'A cobler there was.'

Written in ninety-five, a year of scarcity and Alarm.

TOM.

Come neighbours, no longer be patient and quiet,
Come let us go kick up a bit of a riot;
I'm hungry, my lads, but I 've little to eat,
So we 'll pull down the mills, and we 'll seize all the meat:
I 'll give you good sport, boys, as ever you saw,
So a fig for the justice, a fig for the law.
Derry Down.
Then his pitchfork Tom seiz'd—hold a moment, says Jack,
I 'll show thee thy blunder, brave boy, in a crack,
And if I don't prove we had better be still,
I 'll assist thee straightway to pull down ev'ry mill;
I 'll show thee how passion thy reason doth cheat,
Or I 'll join thee in plunder for bread and for meat. *Derry Down.*
What a whimsey to think thus our bellies to fill,
For we stop all the grinding by breaking the mill!
What a whimsey to think we shall get more to eat,
By abusing the butcher who gets us the meat!
What a whimsey to think we shall mend our spare diet,
By breeding disturbance, by murder and riot?
Derry Down.
Because I am dry, 'twould be foolish, I think,
To pull out my tap and to spill all my drink;
Because I am hungry, and want to be fed,
That is sure no wise reason for wasting my bread;
And just such wise reasons for minding their diet,
Are us'd by those blockheads who rush into riot.
Derry Down.
I would not take comfort from others' distresses,
But still I would mark how God our land blesses;
For though in old England the times are but sad,
Abroad I am told they are ten times as bad;
In the land of the Pope there is scarce any grain,
And 'tis worse still, they say, both in Holland and Spain. *Derry Down.*
Let us look to the harvest our wants to beguile,
See the lands with rich crops how they ev'ry where smile!
Meantime to assist us, by each western breeze!
Some corn is brought daily across the salt seas!
Of tea we 'll drink little, of gin none at all,
And we 'll patiently wait, and the prices will fall. *Derry Down.*
But if we 're not quiet, then let us not wonder,
If things grow much worse by our riot and plunder;
And let us remember, whenever we meet,
The more ale we drink, boys, the less we shall eat,
On those days spent in riot no bread you brought home,
Had you spent them in labour you must have had *some*. *Derry Down.*
A dinner of herbs, says the wise man, with quiet,
Is better than beef amid discord and riot.
If the thing could be help'd I'm a foe to all strife,
And I pray for a peace ev'ry night of my life;
But in matters of state not an inch will I budge,
Because I conceive I'm no very good judge.
Derry Down.
But though poor, I can work, my brave boy with the best,
Let the king and the parliament manage the rest;
I lament both the war and the taxes together,
Though I verily think they don't alter the weather.
The king, as I take it, with very good reason,
May prevent a bad law, but can't help a bad season. *Derry Down.*
The parliament men, although great is their power,
Yet they cannot contrive us a bit of a shower
And I never yet heard though our rulers are wise,
That they know very well how to manage the skies;
For the best of them all, as they found to their cost,
Were not able to hinder last winter's hard frost.
Derry Down.
Besides, I must share in the wants of the times,
Because I have had my full share in its crimes;
And I'm apt to believe the distress which is sent,
Is to punish and cure us of all discontent.

But harvest is coming—potatoes are come!
Our prospect clears up; ye complainers be dumb! *Derry Down.*
And though I 've no money, and though I 've no lands,
I 've a head on my shoulders, and a pair of good hands.
So I 'll work the whole day, and on Sundays I 'll seek
At church how to bear all the wants of the week.
The gentlefolks too will afford us supplies;
They 'll subscribe—and they 'll give up their puddings and pies. *Derry Down.*
Then before I 'm induc'd to take part in a riot,
I 'll ask this short question—what shall I get by it?
So I 'll e'en wait a little till cheaper the bread,
For a mittimus hangs o'er each rioter's head:
And when of two evils I 'm ask'd which is best,
I 'd rather be hungry than hang'd, I protest. *Derry Down.*
Quoth Tom, thou art right, If I rise I 'm a Turk:
So he threw down his pitchfork, and went to his work.

PATIENT JOE:
OR, THE NEW CASTLE COLLIER.

Have you heard of a collier of honest renown,
Who dwelt on the borders of Newcastle town?
His name it was Joseph—you better may know
If I tell you he always was call'd patient Joe.
Whatever betided he thought it was right,
And Providence still he kept ever in sight;
To those who love God, let things turn as they would,
He was certain that all work'd together for good.
He prais'd his Creator whatever befel;
How thankful was Joseph when matters went well!
How sincere were his carols of praise for good health,
And how grateful for any increase in his wealth!
In trouble he bow'd him to God's holy will;
How contented was Joseph when matters went ill!
When rich and when poor he alike understood,
That all things together were working for good.
If the land was afflicted with war he declar'd,
'Twas a needful correction for sins which he shar'd,
And when merciful Heaven bade slaughter to cease,
How thankful was Joe for the blessing of peace!
When taxes ran high, and provisions were dear,
Still Joseph declar'd he had nothing to fear;
It was but a trial he well understood,
From Him who made all work together for good.
Though his wife was but sickly his gettings but small,
Yet a mind so submissive prepar'd him for all;
He liv'd on his gains were they greater or less,
And the giver he ceas'd not each moment to bless.
When another child came he received him with joy,
And Providence bless'd who had sent him the boy;
But when the child died—said poor Joe I 'm content,
For God had a right to recall what he lent.
It was Joseph's ill fortune to work in a pit
With some who believ'd that profaneness was wit;
When disasters befel him much pleasure they show'd,
And laugh'd and said—Joseph, will this work for good?
But ever when these would profanely advance
That *this* happen'd by luck, and *that* happen'd by chance;
Still Joseph insisted no chance could be found,
Not a sparrow by accident falls to the ground.
Among his companions who work'd in the pit,
And made him the butt of their profligate wit,
Was idle Tim Jenkins, who drank and who gam'd,
Who mock'd at his Bible, and was not asham'd.
One day at the pit his old comrades he found,
And they chatted, preparing to go under ground,
Tim Jenkins, as usual, was turning to jest,
Joe's notion—*that all things which happen'd were best.*
As Joe on the ground had unthinkingly laid
His provision for dinner, of bacon and bread,
A dog on the watch, seiz'd the bread and the meat,
And off with his prey ran with foot-steps so fleet.
Now to see the delight that Tim Jenkins express'd!
'Is the loss of thy dinner too, Joe for the best?'
'No doubt on't,' said Joe; 'but as I must eat,
'Tis my duty to try to recover my meat.'
So saying, he follow'd the dog a long round,
While Tim, laughing and swearing, went down under ground.
Poor Joe soon return'd, though his bacon was lost,
For the dog a good dinner had made at his cost.
When Joseph came back he expected a sneer,
But the face of each collier spoke horror and fear;
What a narrow escape hast thou had, they all said,
The pit 's fall'n in, and *Tim Jenkins* is dead!
How sincere was the gratitude Joseph express'd!
How warm the compassion which glow'd in his breast!
Thus events great and small, if aright understood,
Will be found to be working together for good.
'When my meat,' Joseph cry'd 'was just now stol'n away,
And I had no prospect of eating to-day,
How could it appear to a short-sighted sinner,
That my life would be sav'd by the loss of my dinner.'

THE GIN SHOP:
OR A PEEP INTO PRISON.

Look through the land from north to south,
And look from east to west,
And see what is to Englishmen
Of life the deadliest pest.
It is not want, though that is bad,
Nor war, though that is worse
But Britons brave endure, alas!
A self-inflicted curse.
Go where you will, throughout the realm,
You'll find the reigning sin,
In cities, villages, and towns,
—The monster's name is Gin.

The prince of darkness never sent
To man a deadlier foe,
'My name is Legion,' it may say,
The source of many a wo.
Nor does the fiend alone deprive
The labourer of his wealth:
That is not all, it murders too
His honest name and health.
We say the times are grievous hard,
And hard they are, 'tis true;
But, drunkards, to your wives and babes,
They're harder made by you.
The drunkard's tax is self-impos'd,
Like every other sin;
The taxes altogether lay
No weight so great as Gin.
The state compels no man to drink,
Compels no man to game,
'Tis Gin and Gambling sink him down
To rags, and want, and shame.
The kindest husband, chang'd by Gin,
Is for a tyrant known;
The tenderest heart that nature made,
Becomes a heart of stone.
In many a house the harmless babes
Are poorly cloth'd and fed,
Because the craving Gin-shop takes
The children's daily bread.
Come, neighbour, take a walk with me,
Through many a London street,
And see the cause of penury
In hundreds we shall meet.
We shall not need to travel far—
Behold that great man's door;
He well discerns yon idle crew
From the deserving poor.
He will relieve with liberal hand,
The child of honest thrift;
But where long scores of Gin-shops stand
He will withhold his gift.
Behold that shiv'ring female there,
Who plies her woful trade!
'Tis ten to one you'll find that Gin
That hopeless wretch has made.
Look down those steps, and view below
Yon cellar under ground,
There ev'ry want and ev'ry wo
And ev'ry sin is found.
Those little wretches trembling there,
With hunger and with cold,
Were by their parents' love of Gin,
To sin and misery sold.
Blest be those friends* to human kind
Who take these wretches up,
E'er they have drunk the bitter dregs
Of their sad parents' cup.
Look through that prison's iron bars,
Look through that dismal grate,
And learn what dire misfortune brought
So terrible a fate.
The debtor and the felon too,
Though differing much in sin,
Too oft you'll find were thither brought
By all-destroying Gin.
Yet Heav'n forbid I should confound
Calamity with guilt!
Or name the debtor's lesser fault
With blood of brother spilt.
To prison dire misfortune oft
The guiltless debtor brings;
Yet oft'ner far it will be found
From Gin the misery springs.
See the pale manufacturer there,
How lank and lean he lies!
How haggard is his sickly cheek!
How dim his hollow eyes!
He plied the loom with good success,
His wages still were high,
Twice what the village lab'rer gains,
His master did supply.
No book-debts kept him from his cash,
All paid as soon as due
His wages on the Saturday
To fail he never knew.
How amply had his gains suffic'd
On wife and children spent!
But all must for his pleasures go,
All to the Gin-shop went.
See that apprentice, young in years,
But hackney'd long in sin,
What made him rob his master's till?
Alas! 'twas love of Gin.
That serving man—I knew him once,
So jaunty, spruce, and smart!
Why did he steal, then pawn the plate?
'Twas Gin ensnar'd his heart.
But hark! what dismal sound was that?
'Tis Saint Sepulchre's bell!
It tolls, alas, for human guilt,
Some malefactor's knell.
O! woful sound! O! what could cause
Such punishment and sin?
Hark! hear his words, he owns the cause—
Bad Company and Gin.
And when the future lot is fix'd
Of darkness, fire, and chains,
How can the drunkard hope to 'scape
Those everlasting pains!
For if the murd'rer 's doom'd to wo,
As Holy-Writ declares,
The drunkard with self-murderers,
That dreadful portion shares.

* The Philanthropic Society.

TALES.

THE TWO GARDENERS.

Two gardeners once beneath an oak,
Lay down to rest, when Jack thus spoke:
'You must confess dear Will that Nature
Is but a blundering kind of creature;
And I—nay, why that look of terror?
Could teach her how to mend her error.'
'Your talk,' quoth Will, is bold and odd,
What you call Nature, I call God.'
'Well, call him by what name you will,
Quoth Jack, 'he manages but ill;
Nay, from the very tree we 're under,
I'll prove that Providence can blunder.'
Quoth Will, 'Through thick and thin you dash,
I shudder Jack, at words so rash·

I trust to what the Scriptures tell,
He hath done always all things well.'
Quoth Jack, 'I'm lately grown a wit,
And think all good a *lucky hit.*
To Prove that Providence can err,
Not words but facts the truth aver.
To this vast oak lift up thine eyes,
Then view that acorn's paltry size;
How foolish on a tree so tall,
To place that tiny cup and ball.
Now look again, yon pompion* see,
It weighs two pounds at least, nay three;
Yet this large fruit, where is it found?
Why, meanly trailing on the ground.
Had Providence ask'd my advice,
I would have chang'd it in a trice;
I would have said at Nature's birth,
Let Acorns creep upon the earth;
But let the pompion, vast and round,
On the oak's lofty boughs be found.'
He said—and as he rashly spoke,
Lo! from the branches of the oak,
A wind, which suddenly arose,
Beat showers of acorns on his nose;
'Oh! oh:' quoth Jack, 'I'm wrong I see,
And God is wiser far than me.
For did a show'r of pompions large,
Thus on my naked face discharge,
I had been brus'd and blinded quite,
What heav'n appoints I find is right;
Whene'er I'm tempted to rebel,
I'll think how light the acorns fell;
Whereas on oaks had pompions hung,
My broken skull had stopp'd my tongue.

THE LADY AND THE PIE:

OR KNOW THYSELF.

A worthy squire of sober life
Had a conceited boasting wife:
Of *him* she daily made complaint,
Herself she thought a very saint.
She lov'd to load mankind with blame,
And on their errors build her fame.
Her fav'rite subject of dispute
Was Eve and the forbidden fruit.
'Had I been Eve,' she often cried,
'Man had not fall'n, nor woman died;
I still had kept the orders giv'n,
Nor for an apple lost my heav'n;
To gratify my curious mind
I ne'er had ruin'd all mankind
Nor from a vain desire to know,
Entail'd on all my race such wo.'
The squire reply'd; 'I fear 'tis true,
The same ill spirit lives in you;
Tempted alike, I dare believe,
You would have disobey'd like Eve.'
The lady storm'd, and still deny'd
Sin, curiosity, and pride.
The squire, some future day at dinner,
Resolv'd to try this boastful sinner;
He griev'd such vanity possest her,
And thus in serious terms address'd her:
Madam, the usual splendid feast,
With which our wedding day is grac'd,
With you I must not share to-day
For business summons me away.
Of all the dainties I've prepar'd,
I beg not any may be spar'd;
Indulge in ev'ry costly dish,
Enjoy, 'tis what I really wish;
Only observe one prohibition,
Nor think it a severe condition;
On one small dish which cover'd stands,
You must not dare to lay your hands
Go—Disobey not on your life,
Or henceforth you 're no more my wife.'
The treat was serv'd, the squire was gone,
The murm'ring lady din'd alone:
She saw whate'er could grace a feast,
Or charm the eye, or please the taste:
But while she rang'd from this to that,
From ven'son haunch to turtle fat;
On one small dish she chanc'd to light,
By a deep cover hid from sight:
O! here it is—yet not for me!
I must not taste, nay, dare not see;
Why place it there? or why forbid
That I so much as lift the lid?
Prohibited of this to eat,
I care not for the sumptuous treat
I wonder if 'tis fowl or fish,
To know what 's there I merely wish
I 'll look—O no, I lose forever,
If I 'm betray'd, my husband's favour.
I own I think it vastly hard,
Nay, tyranny, to be debarr'd.
John, you may go—the wine's decanted,
I 'll ring or call you when you 're wanted.
Now left alone, she waits no longer;
Temptation presses more and stronger.
'I 'll peep—the harm can ne'er be much,
For though I peep, I will not touch;
Why I 'm forbid to lift this cover,
One glance will tell, and then 'tis over
My husband 's absent; so is John,
My peeping never can be known,'
Trembling, she yielded to her wish,
And rais'd the cover from the dish:
She starts—for lo! an open pie
From which six living sparrows fly.
She calls, she screams, with wild surprise,
'Haste, John, and catch these birds,' she cries
John hears not; but to crown her shame,
In at her call her husband came.
Sternly he frown'd as thus he spoke:
'Thus is your vow'd allegiance broke!
Self-ign'rance led you to believe
You did not share the sin of Eve
Like hers, how blest was your condition!
Like heav'ns, how small my prohibition!
Yet you, though fed with every dainty
Sat pining in the midst of plenty;
This dish, thus singled from the rest,
Of your obedience was the test;
Your mind, unbroke by self-denial,
Could not sustain this tender trial.
Humility from this be taught,
Learn candour to another's fault;
Go know, like Eve, from this sad dinner
You 're both a vain a curious sinner.'

* A Gourd.

THE PLUM-CAKES:

Or, the Farmer and his Three Sons.

A Farmer, who some wealth possest,
With three fine boys was also blest;

The lads were healthy, stout and young,
And neither wanted sense nor tongue.
Tom, Will, and Jack, like other boys,
Lov'd tops and marbles, sport and toys.
The father scouted that false plan,
That money only makes the man;
But, to the best of his discerning,
Was bent on giving them good learning;
He was a man of observation,
No scholar, yet had penetration;
So with due care, a school he sought,
Where his young sons might well be taught.
Quoth he, 'I know not which rehearses
Most properly his themes or verses;
Yet I can do a father's part,
And school the temper, mind, and heart;
The natural bent of each I 'll know,
And trifles best that bent may show.'
'Twas just before the closing year,
When Christmas holidays were near,
The farmer call'd to see his boys,
And ask how each his time employs.
Quoth Will, 'There's father, boys, without,
He 's brought us something good, no doubt.'
The father sees their merry faces,
With joy beholds them, and embraces.
'Come, boys, of home you 'll have your fill.'
'Yes, Christmas now is near,' says Will;
''Tis just twelve days—these notches see,
My notches with the days agree.'
'Well,' said the sire, 'again I'll come,
And gladly fetch my brave boys home!
You two the dappled mare shall ride,
Jack mount the pony by my side;
Meantime, my lads, I've brought you here
No small provision of good cheer.'
Then from his pocket straight he takes,
A vast profusion of plum-cakes;
He counts them out, a plenteous store,
No boy shall have or less or more;
Twelve cakes he gives to each dear son,
When each expected only one;
And then, with many a kind expression,
He leaves them to their own discretion;
Resolv'd to mark the use each made
Of what he to their hands convey'd.
The twelve days past, he comes once more,
And brings the horses to the door
The boys with rapture see appear
The poney and the dappled mare;
Each moment now an hour they count,
And crack their whips and long to mount.
As with the boys his ride he takes,
He asks the history of the cakes.
Says Will, 'Dear father, life is short,
So I resolv'd to make quick sport;
The cakes were all so nice and sweet,
I thought I'd have one jolly treat;
Why should I balk, said I, my taste?
I 'll make at once a hearty feast.
So snugly by myself I fed,
When every boy was gone to bed;
I gorg'd them all, both paste and plum,
And did not spare a single crumb;
Indeed they made me, to my sorrow,
As sick as death upon the morrow;
This made me mourn my rich repast,
And wish I had not fed so fast.'
Quoth Jack, 'I was not such a dunce,
To eat my quantum up at once;
And though the boys all long'd to clutch 'em
I would not let a creature touch 'em;
Nor though the whole were in my pow'r,
Would I one single cake devour;
Thanks to the use of keys and locks,
They 're all now snug within my box;
The mischief is, by hoarding long,
They 're grown so mouldy and so strong,
I find they won't be fit to eat,
And I have lost my father's treat.'
'Well, Tom,' the anxious parent cries,
'How did you manage?' Tom replies,
'I shun'd each wide extreme to take,
To glut my maw, or hoard my cake;
I thought each day its wants would have,
And appetite again might crave;
Twelve school-days still my notches counted
To twelve my father's cakes amounted;
So ev'ry day I took out one,
But never ate my cake alone;
With ev'ry needy boy I shar'd,
And more than half I always spar'd.
One ev'ry day, 'twixt self and friend,
Has brought my dozen to an end:
My last remaining cake to-day
I would not touch, but gave away;
A boy was sick, and scarce could eat,
To him it prov'd a welcome treat:
Jack call'd me spendthrift not to save,
Will dubb'd me fool because I gave;
But when our last day came, I smil'd,
For Will's were gone, and Jack's were spoil'd;
Not hoarding much, nor eating fast,
I serv'd a needy friend at last.'
These tales the father's thoughts employ;
'By these,' said he, 'I know each boy:
Yet Jack, who hoarded what he had,
The world will call a frugal lad;
And selfish gormandizing Will
Will meet with friends and fav'rers still:
While moderate Tom, so wise and cool,
The mad and vain will deem a fool:
But I, his sober plan approve,
And Tom has gain'd his father's love.'

APPLICATION.

So when our day of life is past,
And all are fairly judg'd at last;
The miser and the sensual find
How each misused the gifts assign'd:
While he, who wisely spends and gives,
To the true ends of living lives;
'Tis self-denying moderation
Gains the Great Father's approbation.

TURN THE CARPET:
OR, THE TWO WEAVERS.

IN A DIALOGUE BETWEEN DICK AND JOHN.

As at their work two weavers sat,
Beguiling time with friendly chat;
They touch'd upon the price of meat,
So high, a weaver scarce could eat.
'What with my brats and sickly wife,'
Quoth Dick, 'I 'm almost tir'd of life;
So hard my work, so poor my fare,
'Tis more than mortal man can bear
'How glorious is the rich man's state!
His house so fine! his wealth so great!

Heav'n is unjust, you must agree;
Why all to him? why none to me?
'In spite of what the Scripture teaches,
In spite of all the parson preaches,
This world (indeed I 've thought so long)
Is rul'd, methinks, extremely wrong.
'Where'er I look, howe'er I range,
'Tis all confus'd, and hard, and strange;
The good are troubled and oppress'd
And all the wicked are the bless'd.'
Quoth John: 'Our ign'rance is the cause
Why thus we blame our Maker's laws;
Parts of his ways alone we know,
'Tis all that man can see below,
'See'st thou that carpet, not half done,
Which thou, dear Dick, hast well begun?
Behold the wild confusion there,
So rude the mass it makes one stare!
'A stranger, ign'rant of the trade,
Would say, no meaning's there convey'd;
For where 's the middle, where 's the border?
Thy carpet now is all disorder.'
Quoth Dick, 'My work is yet in bits,
But still in ev'ry part it fits;
Besides, you reason like a lout,
Why, man, that *carpet 's inside out.*'
Says John, 'Thou say'st the thing I mean,
And now I hope to cure thy spleen;
This world, which clouds thy soul with doubt,
Is but a carpet inside out.
'As when we view these shreds and ends,
We know not what the whole intends;
So when on earth things look but odd,
They 're working still some scheme of God.
'No plan, no pattern, can we trace,
All wants proportion, truth, and grace;
The motley mixture we deride,
Nor see the beauteous upper side.
'But when we reach that world of light,
And view those works of God aright,
Then shall we see the whole design,
And own the workman is divine.
'What now seems random strokes, will there
All order and design appear;
Then shall we praise what here we spurn'd,
For then the *carpet shall be turn'd.*'
'Thou 'rt right,' quoth Dick, 'no more I 'll grumble
That this sad world 's so strange a jumble;
My impious doubts are put to flight,
For my own carpet sets me right.'

HYMNS.

THE TRUE HEROES:

Or, the Noble Army of Martyrs

You who love a tale of glory,
Listen to the song I sing;
Heroes of the Christian story,
Are the heroes I shall bring.
Warriors of the world, avaunt!
Other heroes me engage:
'Tis not such as you I want,
Saints and martyrs grace my page.
Warriors, who the world o'ercame
Were in brother's blood imbru'd;
While the saints of purer fame,
Greater far, themselves subdu'd.
Fearful Christian! hear with wonder,
Of the saints of whom I tell;
Some were burnt, some sawn asunder,
Some by fire or torture fell;
Some to savage beasts were hurl'd,
One escap'd the lion's den;
Was a persecuting world
Worthy of these wond'rous men?
Some in fiery furnace thrown,
Yet escap'd unsing'd their hair;
There Almighty pow'r was shown:
For the Son of God was there.
Let us crown with deathless fame
Those who scorn'd and hated fell;
Martyrs met contempt and shame,
Fearing nought but sin and hell.
How the show'r of stones descended,
Holy Stephen, on thy head!
While his tongue the truth defended,
How the glorious martyr bled!
See his fierce reviler Saul,
How he rails with impious breath!
Then observe converted Paul,
Oft in perils, oft in death.
'Twas that God, whose sov'reign pow'r,
Did the lion's fury 'swage,
Could alone, in one short hour,
Still the persecutor's rage.
E'en a woman—women hear,
Read in Maccabees the story!
Conquer'd nature, love, and fear,
To obtain a crown of glory.
Seven stout sons she saw expire,
(How the mother's soul was pain'd.)
Some by sword, and some by fire,
(How the martyr was sustain'd!)
E'en in death's acutest anguish,
Each the tyrant still defy'd;
Each she saw in torture languish,
Last of all the mother dy'd.
Martyrs who were thus arrested,
In their short but bright career,
By their blood the truth attested,
Prov'd their faith and love sincere.
Though their lot was hard and lowly,
Though they perish'd at the stake,
Now they live with Christ in glory,
Since they suffer'd for his sake.
Fierce and unbelieving foes
But their bodies could destroy;
Short though bitter were their woes
Everlasting is their joy.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

O how wond'rous is the story
Of our blest Redeemer's birth!
See the mighty Lord of Glory
Leave his heav'n to visit earth!
Hear with transport, ev'ry creature,
Hear the Gospel's joyful sound;

Christ appears in human nature,
In our sinful world is found;
Comes to pardon our transgression,
Like a cloud our sins to blot;
Comes to his own favour'd nation,
But his own receive him not.
If the angels who attended
To declare the Saviour's birth,
Who from heav'n with songs descended
To proclaim good will on earth:
If, in pity to our blindness,
They had brought the pardon needed,
Still Jehovah's wond'rous kindness
Had our warmest hopes exceeded:
If some prophet had been sent
With Salvation's joyful news,
Who that heard the blest event
Could their warmest love refuse?
But 'twas He to whom in Heav'n
Hallelujahs never cease:
He, the mighty God, was given,
Given to us a Prince of Peace.
None but He who did create us
Could redeem from sin and hell;
None but He could reinstate us
In the rank from which we fell.
Had he come, the glorious stranger,
Deck'd with all the world calls great;
Had he liv'd in pomp and grandeur,
Crown'd with more than royal state;
Still our tongues with praise o'erflowing,
On such boundless love would dwell;
Still our hearts, with rapture glowing,
Feel what words could never tell.
But what wonder should it raise
Thus our lowest state to borrow!
O the high mysterious ways,
God's own Son a child of sorrow!
'Twas to bring us endless pleasure,
He our suff'ring nature bore;
'Twas to give us heav'nly treasure,
He was willing to be poor.
Come, ye rich, survey the stable
Where your infant Saviour lies;
From your full o'erflowing table
Send the hungry good supplies.
Boast not your ennobled stations,
Boast not that you 're highly fed;
Jesus, hear it, all ye nations,
Had not where to lay his head.
Learn of me, thus cries the Saviour,
If my kingdom you 'd inherit;
Sinner, quit your proud behaviour,
Learn my meek and lowly spirit.
Come, ye servants, see your station,
Freed from all reproach and shame;
He who purchas'd your salvation,
Bore a servant's humble name.
Come, ye poor, some comfort gather
Faint not in the race you run,
Hard the lot your gracious Father
Gave his dear, his only Son.
Think, that if your humbler stations,
Less of worldly good bestow,
You escape those strong temptations
Which from wealth and grandeur flow.
See your Saviour is ascended!
See he looks with pity down!
Trust him all will soon be mended,
Bear his cross, you 'll share his crown.

A HYMN OF PRAISE,

FOR THE ABUNDANT HARVEST OF 1796,

After a year of scarcity.

GREAT GOD! when famine threaten'd late
To scourge our guilty land,
O did we learn from that dark fate
To dread thy mighty hand?
Did then our sins to mem'ry rise?
Or own'd we God was just?
Or rais'd we penitential cries?
Or bow'd we in the dust?
Did we forsake one evil path?
Was any sin abhor'd?
Or did we deprecate thy wrath,
And turn us to the Lord?
'Tis true we fail'd not to *repine*,
But did we too *repent?*
Or own the chastisement divine,
In awful judgment sent?
Though the bright chain of Peace he broke,
And War with ruthless sword,
Unpeoples nations at a stroke,
Yet who regards the Lord?
But God, who in his strict decrees,
Remembers mercy still,
Can, in a moment, if he please,
Our hearts with comfort fill.
He mark'd our angry spirits rise,
Domestic hate increase;
And for a time withheld supplies,
To teach us love and peace.
He, when he brings his children low,
Has blessings still in store;
And when he strikes the heaviest blow,
He loves us but the more.
Now *Frost*, and *Flood*, and *Blight** no more
Our golden harvest spoil!
See what an unexampled store
Rewards the reaper's toil!
As when the promis'd harvest fail'd
In Canaan's fruitful land;
The envious Patriarchs were assail'd
By Famine's pressing hand!
The angry brothers then forgot
Each fierce and jarring feud;
United by their adverse lot,
They lov'd as brothers should.
So here, from Heav'n's correcting hand,
Though Famine fail'd to move;
Let Plenty now throughout the land,
Rekindle peace and love.
Like the rich fool, let us not say,
Soul! thou hast goods in store!
But shake the overplus away,
To feed the hungry poor.
Let rich and poor, on whom are now
Such bounteous crops bestow'd,
Raise many a pure and holy vow
Of gratitude to God!
And while his gracious name we praise,
For bread so kindly given;
Let us beseech him all our days,
To give the bread of heav'n.
In that blest pray'r our Lord did frame,
Of all our pray'rs the guide,
We ask that 'Hallow'd be *his* name,'

* These three visitations followed each other in quick succession.

And then *our* wants supplied.
For grace he bids us first implore,
Next, that we may be fed;
We say, 'Thy will be done,' before
We ask 'our daily bread.'

HERE AND THERE

OR, THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.

Being Suitable Thoughts for a New Year.

HERE bliss is short, imperfect, insincere,
But total, absolute, and perfect *there*.
Here time 's a moment, short our happiest state,
There infinite duration is our date.
Here Satan tempts, and troubles e'en the best,
There Satan's pow'r extends not to the blest.
In a weak sinful body *here* I dwell,
But *there* I drop this frail and sickly shell.
Here my best thoughts are stain'd with guilt and fear,
But love and pardon shall be perfect *there*.
Here my best duties are defil'd with sin,
There all is ease without and peace within.
Here feeble faith supplies my only light,
There faith and hope are swallow'd up in sight.
Here love of self my fairest works destroys,
There love of God shall perfect all my joys.
Here things, as in a glass, are darkly shown,
There I shall know as clearly as I 'm known,
Frail are the fairest flow'rs which bloom below,
There freshest palms on roots immortal grow.
Here wants or cares perplex my anxious mind,
But spirits *there* a calm fruition find.
Here disappointments my best schemes destroy
There those that sow'd in tears shall reap in joy.
Here vanity is stamp'd on all below,
Perfection *there* on ev'ry good shall grow.
Here my fond heart is fasten'd on some friend,
Whose kindness *may*, whose life *must* have an end;
But *there* no failure can I ever prove,
God cannot disappoint, for God is love.
Here Christ for sinners suffer'd, groan'd, and bled,
But *there* he reigns the great triumphant head:
Here, mock'd and scourg'd, he wore a crown of thorns,
A crown of glory *there* his brow adorns.
Here error clouds the will, and dims the sight,
There all is knowledge, purity, and light.
Here so imperfect is this mortal state,
If blest myself I mourn some other's fate.
At ev'ry human woe I *here* repine,
The joy of ev'ry saint shall *there* be mine.
Here if I lean, the world shall pierce my heart,
But *there* that broken reed and I shall part.
Here on no promis'd good can I depend,
But *there* the rock of Ages is my friend.
Here if some sudden joy delight, inspire,
The dread to lose it damps the rising fire;
But *there* whatever good the soul employ,
The thought that 'tis *eternal* crowns the joy.

BALLADS.

THE HONEST MILLER

OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

A True Ballad.

OF all the callings and the trades
Which in our land abound,
The miller's is as useful sure
As can on earth be found.
The lord or squire of high degree
Is needful to the state,
Because he lets the land he owns
In farms both small and great.
The farmer he manures the land,
Or else what corn could grow?
The ploughman cuts the furrow deep,
Ere he begins to sow.
And though no wealth he has, except
The labour of his hands;
Yet honest Industry 's as good
As houses or as lands.
The thrasher he is useful too
To all who like to eat;
Unless he winnow'd well the corn,
The chaff would spoil the wheat.
But vain the squire's and farmer's care,
And vain the thrasher's toil;
And vain would be the ploughman's pains
Who harrows up the soil;
And vain, without the miller's aid,
The sowing and the dressing;
Then sure an honest miller he
Must be a public blessing.
And such a miller now I make
The subject of my song,
Which, though it shall be very true,
Shall not be very long.
This miller lives in Glo'stershire,
I shall not tell his name;
For those who seek the praise of God,
Desire no other fame.
In last hard winter—who forgets
The frost of ninety-five?
Then was all dismal scarce, and dear,
And no poor man could thrive.
Then husbandry long time stood still,
And work was at a stand;
To make the matter worse, the mills
Were froze throughout the land.
Our miller dwelt beside a stream,
All underneath the hill;
Which flow'd amain when others froze,
Nor ever stopp'd the mill.
The clam'rous people came from far
This favour'd mill to find,
Both rich and poor our miller sought,
For none but he could grind.
His neighbours cry'd, 'Now miller seize
The time to heap up store,
Since thou of young and helpless babes
Hast got full half a score.'
For folks, when tempted to grow rich,
By means not over nice,
Oft make their numerous babes a plea
To sanctify the vice.
Our miller scorn'd such counsel base,
And when he ground the grain,

With steadfast hand refus'd to touch
Beyond his lawful gain.
'When God afflicts the land,' said he,
'Shall I afflict it more?
And watch for times of public wo
To wrong both rich and poor?
'Thankful to that Almighty Pow'r
Who makes my river flow,
I'll use the means he gives to sooth
A hungry neighbour's wo.
'My river flows when others freeze,
But 'tis at his command;
For rich and poor I'll grind alike,
No bribe shall stain my hand.'
So all the country who had corn
Here found their wants redrest;
May ev'ry village in the land
Be with such millers blest!

KING DIONYSIUS AND SQUIRE DAMOCLES;

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD STORY.

Proper to be sung at all feasts and merry meetings.

THERE was a heathen man, sir,
Belonging to a king;
And still it was his plan, sir,
To covet ev'ry thing.
And if you don't believe me,
I'll name him if you please,
For let me not deceive ye,
'Twas one squire Damocles,
He thought that jolly living
Must ev'ry joy afford;
His heart knew no misgiving,
While round the festive board.
He wanted to be great, sir,
And feed on fare delicious;
And have his feasts in state, sir,
Just like king Dionysius.
The king, to cure his longing,
Prepar'd a feast so fine,
That all the court were thronging
To see the courtier dine.
And there to tempt his eye, sir,
Was fish, and flesh, and fowl;
And when he was a-dry, sir,
There stood the brimming bowl.
Nor did the king forbid him
From drinking all he could,
The monarch never chid him,
But fill'd him with his food.
O then, to see the pleasure
Squire Damocles exprest
'Twas joy beyond all measure,
Was ever man so blest?
With greedy eyes the squire
Devour'd each costly dainty;
You'd think he did aspire
To eat as much as twenty.
But just as he prepar'd, sir,
Of bliss to take his swing;
O, how the man was scar'd, sir,
By this so cruel king!
When he to eat intended,
Lo! just above his head,
He spied a sword suspended
All by a single thread.
How did it change the feasting
To wormwood and to gall,
To think, while he was tasting,
The pointed sword might fall
Then in a moment's time, sir,
He loath'd the luscious feast;
And dreaded as a crime, sir,
The brimming bowl to taste.
Now, if you're for applying
The story I have told,
I think there's no denying
'Tis worth its weight in gold.
Ye gay, who view this stranger,
And pity his sad case;
And think there was great danger
In such a fearful place;
Come, let this awful truth, sir,
In all your minds be stor'd;
To each intemp'rate youth, sir,
Death is that pointed sword,
And though you see no reason
To check your mirth at all,
In some licentious season
The sword on you may fall.
So learn, while at your ease, sir
You drink down draughts delicious,
To think of Damocles, Sir,
And old king Dionysius.

THE HACKNEY COACHMAN:

OR, THE WAY TO GET A GOOD FARE.

To the tune of 'I wish I was a fisherman.'

I AM a bold coachman, and drive a good hack,
With a coat of five capes that quite covers my back;
And my wife keeps a sausage-shop, not many miles
From the narrowest alley in all broad St. Giles.
Though poor, we are honest and very content;
We pay as we go, for meat, drink, and for rent.
To work all the week I am able and willing,
I never get drunk, and I waste not a shilling,
And while at a tavern my gentleman tarries,
The coachman grows richer than he whom he carries,
And I'd rather (said I) since it saves me from sin,
Be the driver without, than the toper within.
Yet though dram-shops I hate, and the dram-drinking friend,
I'm not quite so good, but I wish I may mend;
I repent of my sins, since we all are deprav'd,
For a coachman, I hold, has a soul to be sav'd.
When a riotous multitude fills up a street,
And the greater part know not, boys, wherefore they meet;
If I see there is mischief, I never go there,
Let others get tipsy so I get my fare.
Now to church, if I take some good lady to pray,
It grieves me full sore to be kept quite away;
So I step within side, though the sermon's begun,
For a slice of the service is better than none.
Then my glasses are whole, and my coach is so neat,
I am always the first to be call'd in the street;
And I'm known by the name ('tis a name rather rare)
Of the coachman that never asks more than his fare.

Though my beasts should be dull, yet I don't use them ill;
Though they stumble I swear not, nor cut them up hill,
For I firmly believe there's no charm in an oath
That can make a nag trot, when to walk he is loth.
And though I'm a coachman, I'll freely confess,
I beg of my Maker my labours to bless;
I praise Him each morning, and pray ev'ry night,
And 'tis this makes my heart feel so cheerful and light.
When I drive to a fun'ral I care not for drink,
That is not the moment to guzzle, but think;
And I wish I could add, both of coachman and master,
That both of us strove to amend a bit faster.

VILLAGE POLITICS.

ADDRESSED TO

ALL THE MECHANICS, JOURNEYMEN, AND LABOURERS, IN GREAT BRITAIN.

BY WILL CHIP, A COUNTRY CARPENTER.

[Written early in the French Revolution.]

It is a privilege to be prescribed to in things about which our minds would otherwise be tost with various apprehensions. And for pleasure, I shall profess myself so far from doating on that popular idol, Liberty, that I hardly think it possible for any kind of obedience to be more painful than an unrestrained liberty. Were there not true bounds, of magistrates, of laws, of piety, of reason in the heart, every man would have a fool, nay, a mad tyrant to his master, that would multiply him more sorrows than the briars and thorns did to Adam, when he was freed from the bliss at once, and the restraint of Paradise, and became a greater slave in the wilderness than in the enclosure.—*Dr. Hammond's Sermon.*

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN JACK ANVIL, THE BLACKSMITH, AND TOM HOD, THE MASON.

Jack. What's the matter, Tom? Why dost look so dismal!

Tom. Dismal, indeed! Well enough I may.

Jack. What! is the old mare dead? or work scarce?

Tom. No, no, work's plenty enough, if a man had but the heart to go to it.

Jack. What book art reading? Why dost look so like a hang dog?

Tom. (*Looking on his book.*) Cause enough. Why I find here that I'm very unhappy, and very miserable; which I should never have known if I had not had the good luck to meet with this book. Oh 'tis a precious book!

Jack. A good sign though; that you can't find out you're unhappy without looking into a book for it! What is the matter?

Tom. Matter? Why I want liberty.

Jack. Liberty! That's bad indeed! What! has any one fetched a warrant for thee? Come, man, cheer up, I'll be bound for thee. Thou art an honest fellow in the main, though thou dost tipple and prate a little too much at the Rose and Crown.

Tom. No, no, I want a new constitution.

Jack. Indeed! Why I thought thou hadst been a desperate healthy fellow. Send for the doctor directly.

Tom. I'm not sick; I want liberty and equality, and the rights of man.

Jack. O, now I understand thee. What! thou art a leveller and a republican, I warrant!

Tom. I'm a friend to the people. I want a reform.

Jack. Then the shortest way is to mend thyself.

Tom. But I want a *general reform.*

Jack. Then let every one mend one.

Tom. Pooh! I want freedom and happiness, the same as they have got in France.

Jack. What, Tom, we imitate them? We follow the French! Why they only began all this mischief at first in order to be just what *we* are already; and what a blessed land must this be, to be in actual possession of all they ever hoped to gain by all their hurly-burly. Imitate them indeed!—why I'd sooner go to the negroes to get learning, or to the Turks to get religion, than to the French for freedom and happiness.

Tom. What do you mean by that? ar'n't the French free?

Jack. Free, Tom! ay free with a witness. They are all so free that there's nobody safe. They make free to rob whom they will, and kill whom they will. If they don't like a man's looks, they make free to hang him without judge or jury, and the next lamp-post serves for the gallows; so then they call themselves free, because you see they have no law left to condemn

them, and no king to take them up and hang them for it.

Tom. Ah, but Jack, did'nt their king formerly hang people for nothing too? and besides, were they not all papists before the revolution?

Jack. Why, true enough, they had but a poor sort of religion; but bad is better than none, Tom. And so was the government bad enough too; for they could clap an innocent man into prison, and keep him there too as long as they would, and never say, with your leave or by your leave, gentlemen of the jury. But what's all that to us?

Tom. To us! Why don't many of our governors put many of our poor folks in prison against their will? What are all the jails for? Down with the jails, I say; all men should be free.

Jack. Harkee, Tom, a few rogues in prison keep the rest in order, and then honest men go about their business in safety, afraid of nobody; that's the way to be free. And let me tell thee, Tom, thou and I are tried by our peers as much as a lord is. Why the *king* can't send me to prison if I do no harm; and if I do, there's reason good why I should go there. I may go to law with sir John at the great castle yonder; and he no more dares lift his little finger against me than if I were his equal. A lord is hanged for hanging matter, as thou or I should be; and if it will be any comfort to thee, I myself remember a peer of the realm being hanged for killing his man, just the same as the man would have been for killing *him*.*

Tom. A lord! Well, that is some comfort to be sure. But have you read the Rights of Man?

Jack. No, not I: I had rather by half read the *Whole Duty of Man.* I have but little time for reading, and such as I should therefore only read a bit of the best.

Tom. Don't tell me of those old-fashioned notions. Why should not we have the same fine things they have got in France? I'm for a *constitution*, and *organization*, and *equalization*, and *fraternization.*

Jack. Do be quiet. Now, Tom, only suppose this nonsensical equality was to take place; why it would not last while one could say Jack Robinson; or suppose it could—suppose in the general division, our new rulers were to give us half an acre of ground a-piece; we could to be sure raise potatoes on it for the use of our families; but as every other man would be equally busy in raising potatoes for *his* family, why then you see if thou wast to break thy spade, I, whose trade it is, should no longer be able to mend it. Neighbour Snip would have no time to make us a suit of clothes, nor the clothier to weave the cloth; for all the world would be gone a digging. And as to boots and shoes, the want of some one to make them for us, would be a still greater grievance than the tax on leather. If we should be sick, there would be no doctor's stuff for us; for doctors would be digging too. And if necessity did not compel, and if inequality subsisted, we could not get a chimney swept, or a load of coal from pit, for love or money.

* Lord Ferrers was hang'd in 1760, for killing his steward.

Tom. But still I should have no one over my head.

Jack. That's a mistake: I'm stronger than thou; and Standish, the exciseman, is a better scholar; so that we should not remain equal a minute. I should out-*fight* thee, and he'd out-*wit* thee. And if such a sturdy fellow as I am, was to come and break down thy hedge for a little firing, or take away the crop from thy ground, I'm not so sure that these new-fangled laws would see thee righted. I tell thee, Tom, we have a fine constitution already, and our forefathers thought so.

Tom. They were a pack of fools, and had never read the Rights of Man.

Jack. I'll tell thee a story. When sir John married, my lady, who is a little fantastical, and likes to do every thing like the French, begged him to pull down yonder fine old castle, and build it up in her frippery way. No, says sir John, what shall I pull down this noble building, raised by the wisdom of my brave ancestors; which outstood the civil wars, and only underwent a little needful repair at the revolution; a castle which all my neighbours come to take a pattern by—shall I pull it all down, I say, only because there may be a dark closet, or an awkward passage, or an inconvenient room or two in it? Our ancestors took *time* for what they did. They understood *foundation* work; no running up your little slight lath and plaster buildings, which are up in a day, and down in a night. My lady mumpt and grumbled; but the castle was let stand, and a glorious building it is; though there may be a trifling fault or two, and though a few decays want stopping; so now and then they mend a little thing, and they'll go on mending, I dare say, as they have leisure, to the end of the chapter, if they are let alone. But no pull-me-down works. What is it you are crying out for, Tom?

Tom. Why for a perfect government.

Jack. You might as well cry for the moon. There's nothing perfect in this world, take my word for it: though sir John says, we come nearer to it than any country in the world ever did.

Tom. I don't see why we are to work like slaves, while others roll about in their coaches, feed on the fat of the land, and do nothing.

Jack. My little maid brought home a story-book from the charity school t'other day, in which was a bit of a fable about the belly and the limbs. The hands said, I won't work any longer to feed this lazy belly, who sits in state like a lord and does nothing. Said the feet I won't walk and tire myself to carry him about; let him shift for himself; so said all the members; just as your levellers and republicans do now. And what was the consequence? Why the belly was pinched to be sure, and grew thin upon it; but the hands and the feet, and the rest of the members, suffered so much for want of their old nourishment, which the belly had been all the time administering, while they accused him of sitting in idle state, that they all fell sick, pined away, and would have died, if they had not come to their senses just in time to save their lives, as I hope all you will do.

Tom. But the times—but the taxes, Jack.

Jack. Things are dear to be sure, but riot and murder is not the way to make them cheap. And taxes are high; but I 'm told there 's a deal of old scores paying off, and paying off, by them who did not contract the debt neither, Tom. Besides things are mending, I hope; and what little is done is for us poor people; our candles are somewhat cheaper, and I dare say, if the honest gentleman who has the management of things, is not disturbed by you levellers, things will mend every day. But bear one thing in mind: the more we riot, the more we shall have to pay: the more mischief is done, the more will the repairs cost: the more time we waste in meeting to redress public wrongs, the more we shall increase our private wants. And mind too, that 'tis working, and not murmuring, which puts bread in our children's mouths, and a new coat on our backs. Mind another thing too, we have not the same ground of complaint; in France the poor paid all the taxes, as I have heard 'em say, and the quality paid nothing.

Tom. Well, I know what 's what, as well as another; and I 'm as fit to govern—

Jack. No, Tom, no. You are indeed as good as another man, seeing you have hands to work, and a soul to be saved. But are all men fit for all kind of things? Solomon says; 'How can he be wise whose talk is of oxen?' Every one in his way. I am a better judge of a horse-shoe than Sir John; but he has a deal better notion of state affairs than I; and I can no more do without his employ than he can do without my farriery. Besides, few are so poor but they may get a vote for a parliament-man; and so you see the poor have as much share in the government as they well know how to manage.

Tom. But I say all men are equal. Why should one be above another?

Jack. If that 's thy talk, Tom, thou dost quarrel with Providence, and not with government. For the woman is below her husband, and the children are below their mother, and the servant is below his master.

Tom. But the subject is not below the king: all kings are 'crown'd ruffians:' and all governments are wicked. For my part, I 'm resolv'd I 'll pay no more taxes to any of them.

Jack. Tom, Tom, if thou didst go oft'ner to church, thou wouldst know where it is said, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;' and also, 'Fear God, honour the king.' *Your* book tells you that we need obey no government but that of the people; and that we may fashion and alter the government according to our whimsies: but *mine* tells me, 'Let every one be subject to the higher powers, for all power is of God, the powers that be are ordained of God; whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.' Thou say'st, thou wilt pay no taxes to any of them.—Dost thou know who it was that worked a miracle, that he might have money to pay tribute with, rather than set you and me an example of disobedience to government? an example, let me tell thee, worth an hundred precepts, and of which all the wit of man can never lessen the value. Then there 's another thing worth minding, when St. Paul was giving all those directions, in the epistle to the Romans, for obedience and submission; what sort of a king now dost think they had? Dost think 'twas a *saint* which he ordered them to obey?

Tom. Why it was a kind, merciful, charitable king to be sure; one who put nobody to death or to prison.

Jack. You was never more out in your life. Our parson says he was a monster—that he robbed the rich, and murdered the poor—set fire to his own town, as fine a place as London—fiddled to the flames, and then hanged and burnt the Christians, who were all poor, as if they had burnt the town. Yet there 's not a word about rising.—Duties are fixed, Tom.—Laws are settled; a Christian can't pick and choose, whether he will obey or let it alone. But *we* have no such trials.—We have a king the very reverse.

Tom. I say we shall never be happy, till we do as the French have done.

Jack. The French and we contending for liberty, Tom, is just as if thou and I were to pretend to run a race; thou to set out from the starting-post when I am in already; thou to have all the ground to travel when I have reached the end. Why we 've got it man! we 've no race to run! we 're there already! Our constitution is no more like what the French one was, than a mug of our Taunton beer is like a platter of their soup-maigre.

Tom. I know we shall be undone, if we don't get a new *constitution*—that 's all.

Jack. And I know we shall be undone if we *do.* I don't know much about politics, but I can see by a little, what a great deal means. Now only to show thee the state of public credit, as I think Tim Standish calls it. There 's farmer Furrow, a few years ago he had an odd fifty pounds by him; so to keep it out of harm's way, he put it out to use, on government security, I think he calls it; well, t'other day he married one of his daughters, so he thought he 'd give her that fifty pounds for a bit of a portion. Tom, as I 'm a living man, when he went to take it out, if his fifty pounds was not almost grown to an hundred! and would have been a full hundred, they say, by this time, if the gentlemen had been let alone.*

Tom. Well, still as the old saying is—I should like to do as they do in France.

Jack. What, shouldest like to be murdered with as little ceremony as Hackabout, the butcher, knocks down a calf? or shouldest like to get rid of thy wife for every little bit of tiff? And as for liberty of *conscience*, which they brag so much about, why they have driven away their parsons (ay, and murdered many of 'em) because they would not swear as they would have them. And then they talk of liberty of the press; why, Tom, only t'other day they hang'd a man for printing a book against this pretty government of theirs.

Tom. But you said yourself it was sad times in France, before they pull'd down the old government.

Jack. Well, and suppose the French were as much in the right as I know them to be in the wrong; what does that argue for *us*?—Because

* This was written before the war, when the funds were at the highest.

my neighbour Furrow, t'other day pulled down a crazy old barn, is that a reason why I must set fire to my tight cottage?

Tom. I don't see for all that why one man is to ride in his coach and six, while another mends the highway for him.

Jack. I don't see why the man in the coach is to *drive over* the man on foot, or hurt a hair of his head, any more than you. And as to our great folks, that you levellers have such a spite against, I don't pretend to say they are a bit better than they should be; but that 's no affair of mine; let them look to that they 'll answer for that in another place. To be sure, I wish they 'd set us a better example about going to church, and those things; but still *hoarding 's* not the sin of the age; they don't lock up their *money*—away it goes, and every body's the better for it.—They do spend too much, to be sure, in feastings and fandangoes; and so far from commending them for it, if I was a parson I 'd go to work with 'em, but it should be in another kind of way; but as I am only a poor tradesman, why 'tis but bringing more grist to my mill. It all comes among the people. Their very extravagance, for which, as I said before, their parsons should be at them, is a fault by which, as poor men, we are benefitted; so you cry out just in the wrong place. Their coaches and their furniture, and their buildings, and their planting, employ a power of tradesmen and labourers. Now in this village, what should we do without the castle? Though my lady is too rantipolish, and flies about all summer to hot water and cold water, and fresh water and salt water, when she ought to stay at home with sir John: yet when she does come down, she brings such a deal of gentry that I have more horses than I can shoe, and my wife more linen than she can wash. Then all our grown children are servants in the family, and rare wages they have got. Our little boys get something every day by weeding their gardens, and the girls learn to sew and knit at Sir John's expense, who sends them all to school of a Sunday besides.

Tom. Ay, but there 's not Sir Johns in every village.

Jack. The more 's the pity. But there 's other help. 'Twas but last year you broke your leg, and was nine weeks in the Bristol Infirmary, where you was taken as much care of as a lord, and your family was maintained all the while by the parish. No poor-rates in France, Tom; and here there 's a matter of two million and a half paid for the poor every year, if 'twas but a little better managed.

Tom. Two million and a half!

Jack. Ay, indeed, Not translated into tenpences, as your French millions are, but twenty good shillings to the pound. But when this levelling comes about, there will be no infirmaries, no hospitals, no charity-schools, no Sunday-schools, where so many hundred thousand poor souls learn to read the word of God for nothing. —For who is to pay for them? *Equality* can't afford it; and those that may be willing won't be able.

Tom. But we shall be one as good as another for all that.

Jack. Ay, and bad will be the best. But we must work as we do now, and with this difference, that no one will be able to pay us. Tom! I have got the use of my limbs, of my liberty, of the laws, and of my Bible. The two first I take to be my *natural* rights; the two last my *civil* and *religious* rights: these, I take it, are the *true Rights of Man*, and all the rest is nothing but nonsense, and madness, and wickedness. My cottage is my castle; I sit down in it at night in peace and thankfulness, and 'no man maketh me afraid.' Instead of indulging discontent, because another is richer than I in this world (for envy is at the bottom of your equality works) I read my Bible, go to church, and look forward to a treasure in Heaven.

Tom. Ay, but the French have got it in *this* world.

Jack. 'Tis all a lie, Tom. Sir John's butler says his master gets letters which *say* 'tis all a lie. 'Tis all murder, and nakedness, and hunger, many of the poor soldiers fight without victuals, and march without clothes. These are your *democrats!* Tom.

Tom. What then, dost think all the men on our side wicked?

Jack. No—not so neither—If some of the leaders are knaves, more of the followers are fools. Sir John, who is wiser than I, says the whole system is the operation of fraud upon folly. They 've made fools of most of you, as I believe. I judge no man Tom; I hate no man. Even republicans and levellers, I hope, will always enjoy the protection of our laws; though I hope they will never be our law *makers*. There are many true dissenters, and there are some hollow churchmen; and a good man is a good man, whether his church has got a steeple to it or not.—The new fashion'd way of proving one's religion is to *hate* somebody. Now, though some folk pretend that a man's hating a papist, or a presbyterian, proves him to be a good *churchman*, it don't prove him to be a good *Christian*, Tom. As much as I hate republican works, I 'd scorn to *live* in a country where there was not liberty of conscience; and where every man might not worship God in his own way. Now that liberty they had not in France: the Bible was shut up in an unknown and heathenish tongue.—While here, thou and I can make as free use of ours as a bishop: can no more be sent to prison unjustly than the judge who tries us; and are as much taken care of by the laws as the parliament-man who makes them.—Then, as to your thinking that the new scheme will make you happy, look among your own set and see if any thing can be so dismal and discontented as a leveller.—Look at France. These poor French fellows used to be the merriest dogs in the world; but since equality came in, I don't believe a Frenchman has ever laughed.

Tom. What then dost thou take French *liberty* to be?

Jack. To murder more men in one night, than ever their poor king did in his whole life.

Tom. And what dost thou take a *democrat* to be?

Jack. One who lives to be governed by a thousand tyrants, and yet can't bear a king.

Tom. What is *equality*?

Jack. For every man to pull down every one that is above him: while, instead of raising those below him, to his own level, he only makes use of them as steps to raise himself to the place of those he has tumbled down.

Tom. What is the *new Rights of Man?*

Jack. Battle, murder, and sudden death.

Tom. What is it to be *an enlightened people?*

Jack. To put out the light of the Gospel, confound right and wrong, and grope about in pitch darkness.

Tom. What is *philosophy*, that Tim Standish talks so much about?

Jack. To believe that there's neither God, nor devil, nor heaven, nor hell: to dig up a wicked old fellow's* rotten bones, whose books, Sir John says, have been the ruin of thousands; and to set his figure up in a church and worship him.

Tom. And what is a *patriot* according to the new school?

Jack. A man who loves every other country better then his own, and France best of all.

Tom. And what is *Benevolence?*

Jack. Why, in the new fangled language, it means contempt of religion, aversion to justice, overturning of law, doating on all mankind in general, and hating every body in particular.

Tom. And what mean the other hard words that Tim talks about—*organization* and *function*, and *civism*, and *incivism*, and *equalization*, and *inviolability*, and *imperscriptible*, and *fraternization?*

Jack. Nonsense, gibberish, downright hocus-pocus. I know 'tis not English; sir John says 'tis not Latin; and his valet de sham says 'tis not French neither.

Tom. And yet Tim says he never shall be happy till all these fine things are brought over to England.

Jack. What! in this christian country, Tom? Why dost know they have no *Sabbath* in France? Their mob parliament meets on a Sunday to do their wicked work, as naturally as we do to go to church.† They have renounced God's word and God's day, and they don't even date in the year of our Lord. Why dost turn pale, man? And the rogues are always making such a noise, Tom, in the midst of their parliament-house, that their speaker rings a bell, like our penny-post man, because he can't keep them in order.

Tom. And dost thou believe they are as cruel as some folks pretend?

Jack. I am sure they are, and I think I know the reason. We christians set a high value on life, because we know that every fellow-creature has an immortal soul: a soul to be saved or lost, Tom—Whoever believes that, is a little cautious how he sends a soul unprepared to his grand account. But he who believes a man is no better than a dog, who make no more scruple of killing one than the other.

Tom. And dost thou think our Rights of Man will lead to all this wickedness?

Jack. As sure as eggs are eggs.

* Voltaire.

† Since this they have crammed ten days into the week, in order to throw Sunday out of it.

Tom. I begin to think we're better off as we are.

Jack. I'm sure on't. This is only a scheme to make us go back in every thing. 'Tis making ourselves poor when we are getting rich, and discontented when we are comfortable.

Tom. I begin to think I'm not so very unhappy as I had got to fancy.

Jack. Tom, I don't care for drink myself, but thou dost, and I'll argue with thee, not in the way of principle, but in thy own way; when there's all equality there will be no *superfluity;* when there's no wages there 'll be no drink: and levelling will rob thee of thy ale more than the malt tax does,

Tom. But Standish says, if we had a good government, there'd be no want of any thing.

Jack. He is like many others, who take the king's money and betray him: let him give up the profits of his place before he kicks at the hand that feeds him.—Though I'm no scholar, I know that a good government is a good thing. But don't go to make me believe that *any* government can make a bad man good, or a discontented man happy.—What art musing upon, man?

Tom. Let me sum up the evidence, as they say at 'sizes—Hem! To cut every man's throat who does not think as I do, or hang him up at a lamp-post!—Pretend liberty of conscience, and then banish the parsons only for being conscientious!—Cry out liberty of the press, and hang up the first man who writes his mind!—Lose our poor laws!—Lose one's wife perhaps upon every little tiff!—March without clothes, and fight without victuals!—No trade!—No Bible! No Sabbath nor day of rest!—No safety, no comfort, no peace in this world—and no world to come!—Jack, I never knew thee tell a lie in my life.

Jack. Nor would I now, not even against the French.

Tom. And thou art very sure we are not ruined?

Jack. I'll tell thee how we are ruined. We have a king, so loving, that he would not hurt the people if he could: and so kept in, that he could not hurt the people if he would. We have as much liberty as can make us happy, and more trade and riches than allows us to be good. We have the best laws in the world, if they were more strictly enforced; and the best religion in the world if it was but better followed. While old England is safe, I'll glory in her, and pray for her, and when she is in danger. I'll fight for her, and die for her.

Tom. And so will I too, Jack, that's what I will, (*Sings*)

'*O the roast beef of old Englond!*'

Jack. Thou art an honest fellow, Tom.

Tom. This is Rose and Crown night, and Tim Standish is now at his mischief; but we'll go and put an end to that fellow's work, or he'll corrupt the whole club.

Jack. Come along.

Tom. No; first I'll stay to burn my book, and then I'll go and make a bonfire and—

Jack. Hold, Tom. There is but one thing worse than a bitter enemy—and that is an im-

prudent friend. If thou would'st show thy love to thy king and country, let's have no drinking, no riot, no bonfires: put in practice this text, which our parson preach'd on last Sunday, 'Study to be quiet, work with your own hands, and mind your own business.'

Tom. And so I will, Jack—Come on

BIBLE RHYMES,

ON THE NAMES OF ALL THE BOOKS OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT:

WITH ALLUSION TO SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS.

As a homely digger may show a man a rich mine, so whatever the Book may be which is *presented* to you, that which I *recommend* to you is a *matchless* one.

Hon. Robert Boyles's *Preface to the Style of the Holy Scriptures.*

THESE RHYMES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, BY ONE, WHO HAVING LONG BEEN ANXIOUS FOR THEIR HIGHEST INTERESTS, CANNOT CONSULT THEM BETTER, THAN BY EARNESTLY RECOMMENDING TO THEIR SERIOUS AND DAILY PERUSAL, THAT SACRED VOLUME, EMPHATICALLY CALLED

THE BOOK.

PREFACE.

THIS little piece requires some apology. It was written without the remotest intention of its ever being published. Some friends, for whose opinion the author entertains great deference, suggested that, at a time when such insidious attempts are making, by industry of impiety, to corrupt the principles, and to alienate the mind altogether from the study and belief of the Holy Scriptures, this slight publication might not be wholly useless or unseasonable.

Had health and other circumstances been favourable, many important characters, many striking facts, many engaging histories, might have been additionally introduced, and thus this slight work had been rendered less imperfect. But the writer having in an early attempt to treat on sacred subjects,* introduced many of the most interesting characters and incidents of the Old Testament, they are here frequently omitted or more slightly touched on.

With a hope to excite an increasing interest in the Bible, by inducing the readers to search it for themselves, the writer has generally forborne to make any particular reference to the specific chapter or verse to which the different passages allude. To increase their admiration of the Word of God by such research, is her fervent desire; and this more especially at a period when, by so many recent attacks, its truth is impugned, its authority denied, its doctrines vilified, and the characters it exhibits viewed with abhorrence, or treated with ridicule.

The familiar measure here adopted is very unfavourable to the subject. The author never remembers to have seen a serious poem written in it, except hymns; and even hymns, besides being short, are generally in the quatrain stanza; which, by making the rhyme alternate, gives greater room for elevation in the diction, and expansion of the thought, both of which the measure here used is calculated to cramp and contract.

This trifle, which was intended for little more than a *Catalogue Raisonne* of the *names* of the *books* of the Bible, admits of little poetical embellishment, even were the Author better qualified to bestow it. Indeed, the dignity of the Sacred Volume is so commanding, its superiority to all other compositions so decided, that it never gains any thing by human infusions; paraphrase dilutes it, amplification weakens, imitation debases, parody profanes.

Much more latitude is given in the Old than in the New Testament. The latter consists chiefly of fact and doctrine. It has less imagery; it exhibits a more explicit rule of faith; a more spiritualized code of morals; it is more specifically didactic. On this holy ground, therefore, we must tread with peculiar caution; because here every article of faith is definite; every rule of practice is established; the scheme of salvation is completed: so that all who enlarge on it must carefully avoid the awful sentence denounced on those who add to, or take from, what is written.

Barley Wood, April 2, 1821.

* See Sacred Dramas, and Reflections of King Hezekiah.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

HERE the first history of mankind
From its first origin we find;
God is its author, truth its name,
Salvation all its end and aim:
Here we are shown "the good old way,"
First to believe, and then obey.
God's Spirit dictates; men proclaim
The doctrines as from him they came.
And not by miracles alone,
By prophecy the truth is shown.
Tho' 'tis no scheme for dry dispute,
No scene to wrangle and confute;
Not an arena for debate,
A field for harsh polemic hate;
Yet strict enquiry may be mov'd,
The more 'tis search'd the more 'tis prov'd,
It is a boon by mercy given,
That man may gain some taste of heaven;
Best medicine for the sin-sick soul,
For guilty passions best controul;
To all, its precepts are applied,
The rich man's guard, the poor man's guide;
To fill with gratitude the hearts
Where God his larger gifts imparts;
To cheer with higher hopes the poor,
To teach the suff'rer to endure;
The meek to raise, repress the bold,
To warn the young, to wean the old;
The arms its lends are faith and prayer,
Its fruits, oblivion sweet of care.
Here are the only precepts given
For peace on earth, or rest in heaven.
Sole lesson since the world began,
For fear of God and love to man:
It came with blessings in its train,
Which to recount, the attempt were vain.
It came to hinder fell despair,
The ravages of sin repair;
It came to cheer the contrite heart,
Redemption's wonders to impart;
That he who sins should sin no more;
It came—a lost world to restore.

PART THE FIRST.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS, PSALMS, PROVERBS, AND ECCLESIASTES.

THE PENTATEUCH.

THE first five books for author claim
Moses, and Pentateuch their name.
In GENESIS, which first we call,
Is man's creation, and his fall.
But soon to Adam came the word
That rebel man should be restor'd.
Yet, tho' the gracious promise came,
The first-born bore a murderer's name.
See the whole world by flood expire;
The cities of the plain by fire!
You ask, perhaps, "Who slew all these?"
'Twas sin, the original disease!
From Adam the infection ran;
In downward course from man to man.
Tho' all who draw the vital breath
Must pay the penalty of death,
Yet one* immortal pair we see:
Pledge of *our* immortality!
Enoch, in a corrupted time,
Bequeath'd to us this truth sublime;
God's service is not merely talk,
The man of God with God must walk.
From general laws, immunity
He found, for Enoch did not die,
"God took him!" O emphatic word!
No more was needful to record.
The world grew worse as old it grew,
Sin gathering strength, grew bolder too,
Long-suffering patience now was past,
The appalling sentence comes at last;
"My Spirit shall not always strive,
No further respite will I give."
God bids a refuge straight prepare
For those his goodness meant to spare,
Bless'd Noah, and his favoured race,
Alone obtain the special grace.
A picture of *our* world remark,
In those who labour'd in the ark;
A stronger instance need we find
Of the hard heart of base mankind
Howe'er assiduously they wrought,
No builder his *own* safety sought;
A century was the task pursu'd,
Not one his *own* destruction view'd:
Oh, blind, God's menaced blow to slight!
What! perish with the ark in sight?
See God his awful threat'ning keep,
Break up the fountains of the deep;
Remove the limits long assign'd
Th' encroaching waters fast to bind!
Heaven's windows open; lo, the sky
Pours down its deluge from on high!
The floods that rise, the floods that fall,
Meet at one point and cover all:
All cry, none aid; with anguish wild
The frantic mother grasps her child.
The weak their safety seek below,
The rapid waves above them flow;
The strong attempt the mountain's steep,
The mountains are become the deep.
Half dead with famine, half with fear,
Now few, and fewer now, appear!
All strive, all sink—sink beasts and men,
Perish'd each living substance then.
Existence is extinct!—The world
Itself to dire destruction hurl'd.
Good Noah's house alone remain'd;
The waves his floating ark sustain'd.
There *is* an ark that's open still,
Where all may shelter if they will.
Awful, indeed, if Christians too
Should perish with *their* ark in view!
But if the moral plague abound,
Yet still some righteous men were found;
Righteous, not perfect, you may see
Throughout mankind's long history;
As stars in darkness seem more bright,
So these illume the moral night.
See Abraham full of faith and grace,
Sire of the patriarchal race:
To Isaac turn your wond'ring eyes,
Prefiguring the great Sacrifice!
What Abraham felt, fond parents, say,
Himself his only son must slay!
Though much he mourn'd, for much he lov'd,

* Elijah and Enoch.

His faith, his prompt obedience prov'd;
What dauntless faith those words implied,
"God will himself a lamb provide!"
Joseph, the virtuous, next behold,
Like Christ by his own brethren sold:
The pit, the prison, all unite,
To make his character more bright:
Whence came that strength which could sustain him,
From tempting pleasure's snares restrain him?
Could made the prison, pit, and court,
To him alike a safe resort?
What made him thus unyielding stand?
His God was still at his right hand!
Religion was to him a law;
He knew the Omnipresent saw:
No secrecy his soul can win,
No fancied safety tempt to sin:
Omniscience sees the skulking shame,
Darkness and light to God the same!

Now Exodus records the story
Of Pharaoh's fall and Moses' glory.
By learning form'd, and form'd by nature,
For general, guide, and legislator;
At great Jehovah's high command,
By faith he left th' oppressor's land;
Escap'd the snares by Pharaoh spread,
The numerous phalanx forth he led.
Mark on the margin how they stand;
Behold they cross the sea by land!
God's mighty power is seen once more,
Oh, miracle! they reach the shore!
Egypt pursues, the ocean braves,
They rush between the parted waves!
Back to their course the waves retreat,
Again the refluent waters meet!
If Egypt's shrieks are mix'd with prayer,
They pray to gods who cannot hear!
See Egypt sink, ingulf'd their host,
The rider and his horse are lost!
Israel, unworthy of the boon,
Forgets the wond'rous rescue soon:
Sav'd, not converted;—discontent
Defeats the mighty blessing sent.
By miracle they still were fed,
From heaven receiv'd their daily bread;
Yet murmur'd at the bounteous hand
Which fed them in that desert land:
Yet *we*, these pilgrims while we blame,
And cast reproach on Israel's name;
To murmur, too, we sometimes dare,
Though we have broad to eat and spare!
Moses! thy parting song sublime,
Shall outlive worlds and bury time.
No hallow'd bard, whate'er his worth,
E'er pour'd more warm effusions forth!
O'er Israel's sin how does he sigh,
His God, his Rock, how glorify!
'Attend—the awful truth I sing,
Is no indifferent, no vain thing;
It is your life, your hope, your all;
God is the Lord; obey his call:
In vain for molten Gods you strive,
'Tis I that kill, that make alive!
Fountain of Jacob, just and true!
Thou wat'rest earth with heavenly dew!
From Thee descend the corn and wine,
All health, all gifts, all grace is thine!'
Then pouring the rich blessing round,
He shows them where true rest is found.
'Oh, people sav'd, adore the Lord,
Shield of thy help, celestial sword!
Approach, abide, secure from harms,
Safe in the everlasting arms!
Beneath that panoply divine,
Oh! save us, Lord, for we are thine!'

Leviticus the law proclaims,
And brands two* sacrilegious names.
The Gospel truth this book must own,
Anticipating Christ unknown.
Such types thro' the Old Scriptures run,
And, like the shadow, prove the sun.

Numbers the Hebrews' names declare,
In due arrangement, just and fair:
The nomenclature so exact,
Not deists can disprove the fact.

While Deuteronomy repeats
That law of which the other treats;
Enlarges on th' important theme;
With Moses' death completes the scheme.

See Joshua, type of Jesus, stand,
Fighting for Canaan's promis'd land!

While Judges learn'd their wisdom bring,
Before the Jews demand a king.

God's tender care of pious youth
Is sweetly seen in past'ral Ruth:
Here filial piety is found,
And with its promis'd blessing crown'd.

Good Samuel, as the Lord appoints,
The king so loudly ask'd, anoints;
With sorrow deep th' historian brings
Succession sad of Israel's Kings;

And Chronicles prolongs the story,
So little to the royal glory:
Though some were faithful, just, and true,
We grieve to say they were but few
No prophet on the rolls of fame
Eclipses great Elijah's name:
Impell'd by faith, disdaining fear,
To kings and priests alike sincere!
The altar once on Carmel built
To God, proclaims th' apostate's guilt.
'Twas there th' illustrious Tishbite, born
On Baal to pour indignant scorn,
With keenest irony maintains
His power divine, in heaven who reigns
Contemns, as round the trench he trod,
Their talking, sleeping, journeying god!
To heaven behold him still aspire,
Then reach it in a car of fire!

Ezra deserves immortal praise,
Who sought the temple's walls to raise.

How shall I Nehemiah paint,
At once the courtier and the saint?

In Esther, Providence displays,
To us inscrutable, his ways;
Here the fair queen with modest grace
Obtains protection for her race:
Tho oppress'd from hence a lesson draws
Of courage in a righteous cause;
And here, tho snares for virtue spread,
Return to plague the inventor's head.

* Nadab and Abihu.

Job, on his dunghill, far more great
Than when he dwelt in regal state!
He heard, before, Jehovah's grace,
But now he sees him face to face.
Meekly he bow'd before his God,
He felt the smart, but kiss'd the rod.
"In me, great God, complete thy will!
Slay me, and I will trust Thee still."

Is it a seraph strikes the strings?
Or is it royal David sings?
Thy Psalms divinely bring to view
Jesus, thy root and offspring too.
Mark, how the author's hallowed lays
Begin with prayer, and end with praise!
Commerce how sure! which, while it gives
Due payment, rich returns receives;
As tides, which from the shore recede,
Return to fill the native bed,
So praise which we to God impart,
Comes back in blessings to the heart.
Gainful return, to man when given
Such interchange 'twixt earth and heaven!
As long as inborn sin is felt,
Or penitence in tears shall melt;
As long as Satan shall molest,
Or anguish rend the human breast;
As long as prayer its voice shall raise,
Or gratitude ascend in praise,
So long God's poet shall impart
A balm to every broken heart;
So long the fainting spirit cheer,
And save the contrite from despair.
To Sion's bard it shall be given
To join the immortal choir in heaven;
And when with their's his accents float,
He shall not need to change his note.
Tho' due this tributary praise,
One sin embittered all his days.
The prudent prophet chose the veil
Of fiction for the bloody tale;
The tale enrag'd the blinded king;
"The man shall die who did this thing!"
Thou art the man!—the appalling word
Cuts deeper than a two-edged sword;
All self-deceit is put to flight,
Scar'd conscience re-assumes its right.
Awak'd, the king, in wild surprise,
Prostrate in dust and ashes lies.
The monarch rous'd himself abhorr'd,
And own'd his guilt before the Lord:
Now agoniz'd in prayer he speaks,
The multitude of mercies seeks.
His prayer, his penitence, obtain
A respite from the threaten'd pain.
Tho' God decreed he should not die,
Nor perish everlastingly,
Yet justice sought not to prevent,
Tho' he delay'd the punishment.
The dire effect of sin we see
In his degenerate family.
To him no future peace was known,
One son rebell'd against his throne;
Ungrateful friends, domestic jars,
Intestine tumults, foreign wars:
Contending brothers fiercely strive,
Dark enmity is kept alive;
Now murmurs loud, now famine great,
Now fierce convulsions shake the state;
Divided empire soon we see
Distract his near posterity.
Thus, tho' his pardon mercy seals,
Sin's temporal results he feels.
God with offence will have no part,
E'en in the man of his own heart.
All sadly serves to prove our fall
From purity original.

Taught by the wisdom from above,
See Proverbs full of truth and love.

To thee, O Solomon! belong
The graces of the mystic Song.

Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,
Displays the powerful moral teacher.
How could'st thou, sapient king, combine
Thy faulty life, and verse divine?
Why were thy Proverbs still at strife
With thy dishonoured close of life?
Thou rear'st the Temple—oh, the sin
To quit the God who dwelt within!
Of all, O king, thy *books* have taught,
With holy wisdom richly fraught;
Still more thy large *experience* brings
The emptiness of human things.
In all thy keen and wide pursuit
Of love, power, pleasure, what the fruit?
Satiety in all we see,
In each enjoyment vanity!
Youth might be spar'd a world of woe,
The truth without the trial know,
Would they with abler hands advise,
And trust king Solomon the wise,
That the vex'd heart and sated mind,
In God alone repose can find.

PART THE SECOND.

THE PROPHETS.

Thee, great Isaiah, dare I paint,
Prophet, evangelist, and saint?
So just thy strong prospective view,
'Tis prophecy and history too.
Rapt in futurity, he saw,
The Gospel supersede the law.
Prophet! in thy immortal lines,
The fulness of perfection shines;
There, present things the Spirit seals,
There, things that shall be he reveals,
Doctrine and warning, prayer and praise
Alike our admiration raise.
Amaz'd, we see the hand divine
Each thought direct, inspire each line.
Still has the seraph's burning coal
Left its deep impress on the soul;
Still shall the sacred fire survive,
Warm all who read, touch all who live!
'Twere hopeless to attempt the song,
So vast, so deep, so sweet, so strong!
Fain would I tell how Sharon's rose,
In solitary deserts blows;
Fain would I speak of Carmel's hill,
Whose trees the barren waste shall fill;
Of Lebanon's transplanted shade,
To sandy valleys how convey'd;
The noble metaphors we find
To loftiest objects there assign'd.
These splendid scenes before us bring
Th' invisible redeeming King.

In every image, every line,
Messiah! we behold Thee shine.
But who shall dare these charms to tell,
One British* bard has sung so well?
His *Christian* page shall never die,
O si sic omnia! all reply.
Blest Prophet! who a theme could'st find
Congenial to restore thy mind!
Here we behold together brought
Splendour of diction and of thought;
In these bold images we see
Grandeur without hyperbole.
Here all God's attributes unite;
The gracious and the infinite;
Beyond imagination's dream,
Thy true, august, and holy theme.
All that the loftiest mind conceives,
All that the strongest faith believes,
All were too feeble to express
God's love, his pow'r, his holiness!
His length, and breadth, and depth, and height,
In all their wide extremes unite;
No danger of excess is here,
To sink too low is all thy fear.
To His broad eye, all nations see
Are less than nought, are vanity.
To him all Lebanon could bring
Only a worthless offering;
The waters at his bidding, stand
Within the hollow of his hand;
The mountains in his scales are weigh'd.
The hills are in his balance laid;
Measur'd by his almighty hand,
The globe 's a particle of sand!
Though with tremendous arm he come,
With power which strikes the nations dumb;
Centre and source of light and love,
In whom we are, and live, and move;
Though not confin'd to time or place,
Not to the vast extent of space;
Objects of his paternal care,
The meanest still his mercies share;
He who in highest heaven resides,
Yet in the contrite heart abides.
Now, shepherd-like, his flock he feeds,
The tender bears, the feeble leads;
Power to the weak, but trusting saints
He gives, and might to him that faints.
The young may fail, the strong be weak,
But all who his salvation seek,
Strong in the Lord, shall be renew'd;
With new-born vigour be endu'd;
On eagles' wings sublimely soar,
To fear, and faint, and sin no more.†

Hear Jeremiah's plaintive song
Pour its full tide of grief along!
By predisposing grace ordain'd,
The prophet's functions he sustain'd;
By his predicting voice reveal'd,
Thy doom, O Babylon, is seal'd!
On Judah 'twas his fate to see
Accomplish'd his own propheey.
In what pathetic strains he show'd
Their miseries from their vices flow'd!
The *form* of goodness they defend,
But hate its *power* and miss its *end*,
For lying vanities abhorr'd,
They plead 'the Temple of the Lord;'
'The Temple of the Lord are these!'
Their varnish'd falsehoods more displease,
As if the edifice alone
Their practis'd evils could atone.
The Temple is beyond dispute:
A means, but not a substitute:
A fair profession may be found,
With lives unholy, hearts unsound.

No reigning vice he left untold,
Expostulation sad, yet bold,
Lays bare the sins they sought to hide,
Vain boasting, arrogance, and pride:
Reproves alike both age and youth;
Neither is valiant for the truth.
Wisdom, or wealth, or power, or might,
Alone, as rightly us'd, is right.
All glorying is by Heaven abhorr'd,
Save that which glories in the Lord.

Sublimely sad his woes impart
Their Lamentations to the heart.
Pity and woe his bosom share,
Anger and fondness, grief and prayer.
Fountains of tears could scarce express
His sorrows' and his love's excess.

Ezekiel comes in awful state,
His vision mystically great!
The Prophet, see, his watch-tower keep,
The shepherd blame, console the sheep.

When Babylon's imperial lord
Crush'd Judah by his conqu'ring sword;
Daniel, erect, of noble mind,
With three believing brothers join'd,
Captives among the Jews were brought,
And in the royal palace taught;
Chaldea's learning they acquir'd,
The king the ingenious youths admir'd;
At dainty tables gave them meat,
Himself ordain'd the plenteous treat.
The tempting cates he bade provide,
The daily bounties he supplied;
The wines, the royal vintage find,
Seduce not Daniel's guarded mind,
Tempt not the self-denying three
All shun the snares of luxury.
'No food, but pulse, before us bring,
No drink but the translucent spring.
The king an image vast display'd,
Enormous was the statue made;
With impious zeal his laws ordain,
All should repair to Dura's plain.
Princes and counsellors appear
Rulers of provinces be there!
At sound of sackbut, psaltery, flute,
All must attend: who dares dispute
The high behest, who will not own
The idol's godhead, shall be thrown
Deep in the fiery cauldron's blaze,
And burn in that capacious vase.
See Dura's plain how crowded now!
All make the prostituted vow;
All praise, all honour, all adore;
The zealous king can ask no more.
What, all? Is no exception found,
In idol worship *all* abound?
The holy brotherhood behold
In God's almighty strength how bold!

* See Pope's exquisite poem of "the Messiah."
† Isaiah chap. xl.

Nor flute nor sackbut's sound controuls
The firm, fix'd purpose of their souls.
Their eyes, their hearts are rais'd n high,
The burning cauldron they defy,
Now hear the valiant brothers speak,
See them magnanimously meek.
No arts to soothe the haughty king,
No charge against his idol bring,
No doubts, no fears, no hesitation;
They wait no slow deliberation.
Prepar'd they stand. They scorn to swerve
'Thy gods, O king, we will not serve;
We serve Jehovah; his command
Can save his servants from thy hand,
E'en from the flames his children save,
Snatch from the fearful fiery grave.
If not, obedience is his due,
In life, in death, resolv'd and true,
No image shall our worship see,
No idol, though set up by thee.'
The king with madd'ning fury turns;
With sevenfold heat the cauldron burns;
To such intensity it grew,
The men who cast them in, it slew.
The ardent blaze unaw'd they dare,
They burn not! God's own Son is there!
Sav'd by an all controlling hand,
Unhurt, amidst the flames they stand.
Triumphant Lord! sav'd by thy power,
Nor floods shall drown, nor flames devour.
The awe-struck king the scene surveys;
Hear him the cry of rapture raise:
'They live! come forth! let my command
Be straight proclaim'd throughout the land;
Let Babylon's wide empire know
God reigns above, and rules below.
If any dare my law deny,
Or Azariah's God defy,
On dunghill heaps they shall be trod;
No God delivers like this God.'
Let youthful readers not despise
The hints which from this tale arise;
If base intemperance had possess'd
Its empire o'er the yielding breast:
Or did excess in wine obtain
A conquest o'er the youthful brain,
By these joint enemies subdu'd,
Where might have been their fortitude?
Who rules the appetite, shall find
An easier task to rule the mind.

Daniel, the statesman, saint, and sage,
Brav'd, yet unhurt, the lion's rage.
How fervently the Prophet spoke!
Warm from his lips the rapture broke:
Our right'ousness we dare not plead,
For we have none in thought or deed:
Thy oracles neglected lie;
Abus'd, thy dreadful majesty!
Our sins are great, yet greater still
Thy power to pardon, and thy will;
Oh, Lord, forgive! Oh, hear us, Lord!
For thy own sake thy help afford.
So prompt to prayer to grant thine aid,
'Tis heard almost before 'tis made.
Soon may it come, the day all hail;
When God's free Spirit shall prevail:
In full effusion, large and wide,
In ev'ry heart be multiplied.
What *must* arrive, if God be true,
Why wait for in a distant view?
Why not at once besiege the throne,
Till Heaven the supplication own?

Hosea, in each indignant line,
Denounc'd on sin the wrath divine.

Joel directs to fast and pray,
And God's displeasure turn away;
The threat'nings of the Lord he brings,
And then his goodness sweetly sings:
Why will ye perish! turn, O turn,
Before his indignation burn!
Bow down your heart, his kindness prove,
Not merely loving,—God is love;
Quick to forgive, slow to resent:
Approach his footstool and repent.
He will your contrite prayers receive,
Perhaps he may a blessing leave:
Corn, wine, and oil, again bestow,
Remove the plague, and heal the woe.

Amos exhorts, and warns, and strives
That Judah should reform their lives.
His powerful precepts never cease
To warn the rich who live at ease.
You that on downy couches lie,
Or doze on beds of ivory;
You who voluptuously consume
Your wealth, whose meal's a hecatomb;
Who at a single feast exhaust
A vineyard of uncounted cost;
Whose perfumes, floating in the air,
A Sybarite might be proud to share;
Whose festive luxuries must be crown'd
With the soft lute and viol's sound;
Are *you* the men of grief who melt
At tales of woe by brethren felt?
Ask Amos: he this truth imparts,
That pleasure hardens human hearts
That selfish feelings most abound
Where ease and luxury are found.
How strange the paradox, yet true,
That what dissolves should harden too!

Brief Obadiah, full of grace,
Says much, though in a little space.

Jonah! How high thy honours stand,
Who by one sermon rous'd a land!
At the last day how will thy fame,
Oh Nineveh, my country shame!
Jonah! thy honours sunk how low
When wrath deform'd thy sullen brow,
Better a mighty empire fall,
Than Jonah's credit sink at all!
Oh human selfishness how great,
To mourn a gourd and not a state!
The prophet here the pastor teaches
To practice what so well he preaches.

Micah, admir'd through ev'ry age,
The babe of Bethlehem crowns thy page!
With what precision dost thou trace
The then obscure, now honour'd place!

Nahum, all hail thy muse of fire,
The glories of thy dying lyre!
"The still small voice" no more is heard,
As when of old the Lord appear'd.
The whirlwind, and the driving storm,
His fearful wonders now perform;

How terrible his thunders sound!
The awe-struck sinner how confound!
No horrors can the guilty move,
Like the fierce wrath of injur'd love.
Blest Prophet! had thy strains been heard
From the proud lyre of Theban bard,
How would the wrapt enthusiast turn,
"To thoughts that breathe, and words that burn!"
But tho' not nurs'd on Pindus' mount,
Nor fed from Aganippe's fount;
Thou offerest at a loftier shrine
Than Delphi own'd, thy ode divine.
Thy muse with nobler claims shall rise:
Her inspirations from the skies;
This the chief glory of thy lays,
Thou hadst a *living* God to praise.

Though, HABAKKUK, thy name refuse
To bend obedient to the muse,
Yet thy sweet promises impart
Warm comfort to the drooping heart.
In thy fam'd prayer, sublimely sweet,
The saint and muse in concert meet.
God came from Teman; what array
Of confluent glories marks his way!
Brightness above, around was sent;
The pestilence before him went.
The skies with unknown splendours blaze,
Heaven shows his power, and earth his praise;
The everlasting mountains fled,
The rivers trembled in their bed;
Bow'd the perpetual hills; the deep
Through its dark eaves was heard to sweep.
His arrows fly! Lord, at thy will
Th' astonish'd sun and moon stand still!
The shining of thy glitt'ring spear,
Transfix the heathen bands with fear.
One glance of thy pervading eye
Measures the earth; the nations fly
Dissolv'd and scatter'd; Cushan's tents
Burst forth in deep and loud laments.
They tremble at the distant sound,
Sudden thy troops their tents surround.
Yet tho' Chaldea's hostile band
Pour in their hordes, despoil the land;
Yet though the fig tree may be found
With neither fruit nor blossom crown'd;
The olive and the vine decay,
And flocks and herds be torn away;
My song of praise my God shall hear,
More free, more fervent, more sincere.
"Revive thy work;" tho' all should fail,
Let grace and godliness prevail.
Lord of my strength; my joy, my crown,
Thy boundless mercies let me own!
Thy great salvation sets me free,
I shall have all in having Thee.
Thou ZEPHANIAH, dost record
Boldly the terrors of the Lord!
HAGGAI the slothful Jews exhorts
To build the temple's hallow'd courts:
They, while their splendid mansions shine,
Neglect JEHOVAH's sacred shrine.

Thy visions, ZECHARIAH, stand
As beacons to a guilty land;
Tho' awfully obscure, yet true,
They teach the Briton as the Jew.
Known to the Lord, the day will come
Reversing Salem's awful doom!
Where nought was seen but waste and woe,
There shall the living waters flow;
Destructions direful work be past,
And Christ the King be crown'd at last.
Her courts, by those who long have fought
Against her, eagerly he sought:
One Lord, one God, shall reign alone,
His name, long prophesied, be ONE.
On every vessel, every breast,
One grand inscription be imprest;
And HOLINESS TO GOD be found
Within, without, above around!

Thou, MALACHI, though last not least,
Prepar'st for us the Gospel feast.
* * * * *

Yet e'er the ancient books you leave,
This truth in all your hearts receive,—
That all the saints unite with care
To prove the omnipotence of prayer.
Search thro' the annals of mankind,
One solitary instance find;
Prove that you know one prayer preferr'd
In faith by man, by God not heard;
Then boldly venture, if you dare,
No more to lift your heart in prayer.
Till then, pray on; 'twill clear your way.
Chiefly for God's own Spirit pray:
There we shall find, if there we seek,
Wealth for the poor, strength for the weak
Soundness for sickness, life for death,
Deriv'd from this inspiring breath;
Till every nation, tongue and tribe,
The healing influence shall imbibe
Distil like genial drops of rain,
Or dews upon the tender grain:
This in the secret of the soul
Each strong temptation shall controul,
And some faint image, lost before,
Of its bright origin restore.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

PART THE THIRD.

THE GOSPELS.

THIS dispensation, clear and bright,
Brings immortality to light;
Proclaims the rebel Man restor'd,
Th'Apostate brought to know the Lord.
Within this consecrated ground
Discrepancies are never found;
The writers vary just to prove
That not in concert do they move;
While Jesus' glory stands reveal'd,
The author's faults are not conceal'd;
No selfish arts, no private ends,
But all to one grand centre tends;
No fact disguis'd however wrong,
No truth kept back, however strong.
One sure criterion leaves no doubt,
Consistency prevails throughout:
The doctrine who shall dare disprove,
Of genuine faith which works by love?

MATTHEW and MARK divinely treat
Those truths which LUKE and JOHN repeat:
Tho' all concur in one grand scheme,
Each throws fresh light upon the theme
MATTHEW by no vain hope entic'd,

Left all he had to follow Christ;
Behold him faithfully record
The matchless Sermon of his Lord.
Here, every want its refuge seeks,
Here, every grace its nature speaks;
Each in its own appropriate place,
The blessing suited to the case.
Each gift to its own want confin'd;
Mercy the merciful shall find.
How cheering to the poor in spirit,
Promis'd a kingdom to inherit!
Told e'en on earth the meek man knows
The best enjoyments Heaven bestows;
Lovers of peace shall peace possess,
Comfort the comfortless shall bless;
That he who feels the oppressor's rod
Feels more the mercies of his God;
Proclaims, the pure in heart shall see,
In God, Essential Purity.

Mark, next among the historic saints,
The Baptist of the desert paints.
Herod the prophet gladly heard,
In many things obey'd his word.
But mark the rapid race of sin!
They fast advance who once begin.
Long train'd in vice, the tempter now
Ensnares him to a sinful vow:
Her graceful movements with his heart,
He will with half his kingdom part:
Sudden he cries, by passion driven,
"Make thy demand it shall be given."
Fearless she ask'd the Baptist's head,
The king was griev'd, the king obey'd:
O fruitless sorrow, vainly spent,
To mourn the crime he might prevent;
If sinful such a vow to make,
More sin to keep it than to break,
To death he doom'd the saint he lov'd;
Condemn'd the preacher he approv'd;
And she, whose softness charm'd before,
Herself the bleeding victim bore.
What wonder if the king, amaz'd,
Should dread in Christ that John was rais'd.

See Luke the glorious scene record,
The scene of his transfigur'd Lord!
This sight of wonder and of love
Confirms the glorious state above:
How blest the three* to whom 'twas given
To view three† witnesses from heaven!
The representatives they saw
Of Gospel, Prophecy, and Law.
Luke more Christ's miracles records,
John more preserves his gracious words;
Records for Christian consolation,
His Saviour's heavenly conversation,
Though John for ever stands approv'd
The blest disciple Jesus lov'd;
Yet all one path devoutly trod,
And follow'd their redeeming God.
In Him the wond'rous union view,
Atonement and *example* too!
His death sole means lost man to save;
His life our lives a pattern gave.
Explore the mystery as we can,
The perfect God was perfect man:
As man he felt affliction's rod,
As man he suffer'd, rose as God.
This union all his actions prove,
As God, as man, he show'd his love,
As man to man in every state
Something he left to imitate.
Divine Philanthropist! to Thee
We lift the heart, and bow the knee
As man, man's sympathies he felt;
In tears of tenderness could melt;
Weep o'er the fated city's doom;
Weep, Lazarus, o'er thy honour'd tomb!
The hidden heart of man he knew;
Felt for his wants and weakness too.
The bruised reed he never broke,
His burden easy, light his yoke;
From heaven to earth his mercies reach,
Alike to save us, or to teach.
When call'd on, error to reprove,
Reproof was kindness, censure love:
A cure his ready hand applies
For blindness, or of heart, or eyes.
Tho' with a look, a touch, a word
The long-lost vision he restor'd;
A casual hint may pastors seize
For those who yet see men as trees:
Jesus watch'd o'er th' imperfect sight,
And blest the blind with *gradual* light.
His saints no vain display relate,
No miracles for pomp or state;
No artful show for private ends,
But all to use and mercy tends.
His life a constant lecture reads
For minor as for greater deeds;
Not that *his* hunger might be fed,
He multiplies the scanty bread:
The famish'd troops in order plac'd,
He ne'er forgot to bless the feast:
Though endless stores he could produce,
He sav'd the fragments for their use.
We pass each suffering, glorious scene,
The manger and the Cross between;
All 'he began to do, and teach'
We pass, till Calvary we reach.
The attempt almost too bold we deem,
And trembling touch the awful theme.
All eloquence, all power of speech,
Imagination's loftiest reach,
Fall short, and could but faintly prove
Th' incarnate God's last scene of love.
Abandon'd, none his woes partake;
One friend denies him, all forsake.
Yet tho' the sacred blood was shed,
'Captivity was captive led.'
The annals of mankind explore,
Did ever conqueror before
Make palpable to human eyes,
Achieve, such glorious victories?
Besides the triumphs of his grace,
Which only faith's purg'd eye can trace;
Marvels applied to sight and sense,
Exhibit his omnipotence.
Shrouded Divinity confest,
What prodigies the Lord attest!
Things contrary, opposing creatures
Struck at the sight, forget their natures,
The human voice is mute; the dumb
And senseless eloquent become.
Things breathless, things inanimate
Renounce, nay contradict their fate.
Things never meant to sympathise
Astonish unbelieving eyes.
The firm earth trembled at the view;

* Peter, James, and John.
† Jesus, Moses, and Elias.

'Th' indignant sun his light withdrew;
No natural cause eclips'd his face,
He would not witness man's disgrace.
Asunder torn, the rocks proclaim
Their sympathies with loud acclaim.
The yawning sepulchres unclose;
To life their sleeping tenants rose;
The Temple's vail is seen to rend,
And with it all distinctions end!
All various nature takes a part,
All, save the obdurate human heart.
The soldier, and th' expiring thief
Alone, proclaim their firm belief.
Lord, 'IT IS FINISHED:' here we meet
Promise and prophecy complete.

Then come the APOSTLES' wond'rous facts,
Their travels, miracles, and ACTS.
The Holy Spirit from above,
Given as the Messenger of Love.
The various languages once sent,
To Babel as its punishment,
Here take a diff'rent nature quite,
Not meant to scatter but unite;
That every nation here below,
In its own tongue God's word might know.
Ye, who to idols long confin'd,
Are blind in heart, and dark in mind;
Half quench'd the intellectual ray,
While man withheld the moral day;
To the strong hold, ye prisoners, turn,
Prisoners of hope! no longer mourn.
See Christ extended empire gains,
See mountains sinking into plains!
The Builders on the CORNER-STONE,
Cease not like Babel's—they work on,
Till Saba and Arabia bring
Due tribute to th' Eternal King;
The living WORD shall life impart
Unseal the eye, and change the heart;
Till Jew and Gentile truth shall see,
Greek and Barbarian, bond and free;
Not by man's might, nor deed, nor word,
But by the Spirit of the Lord.
Hear martyr'd Stephen, as he dies,
Pray for his murd'rous enemies!
Then bring from Greek or Roman story
So pure an instance of true glory!
And *is* the furious bigot Saul
Become, indeed, the humble Paul?
Strange pow'r of all-transforming grace,
The lamb assumes the lion's place!
So blind, when persecution's rod
He held he thought 'twas serving God:
But now so meek, himself he paints
'Less than the least of all the saints!'
Stephen! thy prayer in death preferr'd
To save thy enemies, is heard;
And Paul perhaps the earliest fruit
Of the first martyr's dying suit.
Forgive the Muse if she recall
So oft to mind the sainted Paul;
We pass the awful truths he tells,
His labours, woes, and miracles;
We pass the pow'rs his cause who heard;
How Felix trembled, Festus fear'd;
Pass, how the Jewish king receiv'd
The truth, half doubted, half believ'd;
We pass the different works of grace
In Lydia, and the jailor's case;
We pass the perils Paul endur'd
From stripes; in prison how immur'd;
In nakedness and hunger groan'd;
Betray'd, thrice beaten, shipwreck'd, ston'd!
In every varying state we see
Only a change in misery.
How oft has admiration hung
On the great lyric bard, who sung
The warrior fam'd in Punic story,
Who swell'd the tide of Roman glory:
With magnanimity heroic,
He dignifies the noble Stoic,
See the illustrious captive stand,
Resolv'd unshaken, on the strand.
Imploring friends around him weep;
All mourn the hero all would keep.
E'en the stern senators in vain
The patriot would at last detain.
No blessings of domestic life,
No darling child, nor tender wife
He heeds; repels his wife's embrace,
Th' endearments of his infant race.
No sigh he heaves, he drops no tear,
Naught but his oath and country dear.
He knows the tortures which await,
Knows all the horrors of his fate;
By death in direst shapes unmov'd,
He coolly quitted all he lov'd.
Compos'd, as if hard law-suits past,
He sought a calm retreat at last;
Such calm as crowns Venafrian fields,
Such charms as cool Tarentum yields.
The great Apostle now behold,
A hero cast in Christian mould;
Though learn'd, he will not take his rule
From Doctors of the Stoic school.
Religion stops not nature's course,
But turns to other streams its force.
Forewarn'd, he knew where'er he went
'Twas prison, death, or banishment.
'Twas not a vague, uncertain fear;
God's Spirit show'd him what was near,
Show'd him the woes which must befall,
Not in one country, but in all.
Behold him now encircled stand,
Like the brave Roman on the strand:
A lovelier scene* adorns no page
Than that which now our thoughts engage.
Weeping, his Christian friends surround,
Their tender anguish knows no bound;
Their tears to him their grief impart,
'Mean you to weep and break my heart?'
Hear him with modest grace record
His toils for his forgiving Lord:
Pour out the tender love he feels,
Then to their justice he appeals.
Still to your highest interests true,
Witness, I sought not yours, but you.
This heart for you my daily care,
Is lifted up in ceaseless prayer;
These hands have oft procur'd my bread,
And labour'd that the poor be fed.
O treasure close in every breast,
Your Saviour's posthumous bequest,
If 'tis a blessing to receive,
Far more a blessing 'tis to give,
Then warns to feed the church of God,
Purchas'd by his redeeming blood.

*Acts, Chap. xx.

Thrice bless'd the Pastor who, like Paul,
The past with comfort can recall;
His life and doctrine both review
To auditors who feel both true;
Fears not his conduct to declare
Holy, unblameable, sincere.
His preaching catholic; he speaks
Impartially to Jews and Greeks.
No words of doubtful disputation
Allure from his grand end—salvation;
Faith and repentance form his theme,
Compendium of the Christian scheme!
No searching truth he e'er conceal'd,
But God's whole counsel still reveal'd.
He speaks:—'The woes which must befall
My trusting soul shall ne'er appal.
If I for God my span employ;
If He my course may crown with joy;
If I may spend my painful race,
To testify redeeming grace;
No dread of death my soul shall move,
Secure in him I serve and love.'
His friends, lamenting, crowd the shore,
They part, they see his face no more:
Their sorrows and his own to cheer,
He consecrates the scene with prayer.

PART THE FOURTH.

THE EPISTLES.

Next come the Romans, here we trace
The flagrant manners of their race.
Tho' Nero then Rome's sceptre sway'd,
Yet conscientious Paul obey'd;
Fearless he taught that all should bring
Allegiance to their rightful king.
In this epistle we may find
The depths and heights of his great mind:
Here rhetoric and logic meet
The cause of faith to vindicate.
Paul, when the rich Corinthians came,
Found much to praise and much to blame:
Luxurious, negligent, and proud;
No error was by him allow'd.
As Christian truth should still be told,
The righteous Paul is meekly bold;
And yet such tenderness appears,
His very frowns are mix'd with tears!
One glorious truth he here defends,
That truth on which *all* truth depends:
Labours one doctrine to maintain,
Which if not true, he preach'd in vain;
Vain to their faith, which might not trust
The resurrection of the just.
Then mounting above space of time,
He soars with energy sublime;
Exhausts on this grand contemplation
High argument, bold illustration!
Created nature see he brings,
Attested to the truth he sings:
All grain, all flesh, their tribute lend;
The diff'ring stars the truth defend:
If these proclaim God's glory true,
When the material heavens we view,
His glory sun and moon declare,
When on this doctrine brought to bear.
In vain shall death his prey devour,
'Twas sown in weakness, rais'd in power!
Nor slow the process: Heaven is nigh:
Quick, in the twinkling of an eye.
Methinks I see the mould'ring clay
Start into life, wake into day!
Dread sound! 'tis the last trumpet's voice!
Reviv'd, transported, all rejoice.
Hark! heard I not that rapturous cry,
Death's swallow'd up in victory?
Jesus—the ransom'd join to sing,
Jesus, oh, Death! extracts thy sting.
Can Paul, absorb'd in scenes so bright,
Again on earth vouchsafe to light?
To drop from his exhaustless store,
One parting, pointed moral more?
One added precept deign to press?
He can—awake to righteousness:
In God's great work still more abound,
Nor shall your labours vain be found.

The bold Galatians Paul reproves,
And much he blames, tho' much he loves;
Condemns the teachers whom he saw
Exchange the Gospel for the law.
To clear his doctrine from suspicion,
He vindicates his heavenly mission.

Th' Ephesians stand in glory bright,
On whom Paul shed the Gospel-light,
Where great Diana was ador'd,
They follow'd on to know the Lord:
This matchless letter you will find
A perfect model of its kind.
Where Anthony with Brutus fought,
There Christian Paul a refuge sought.
Yet e'en Philippians could be found
The Saviour in his saint to wound:
A prison the reward they gave
The man who came their souls to save
Did Paul the cruelty resent,
Or in reproach his anger vent?
No;—if the saint *exceeds* in love,
Invokes *more* favours from above:
If e'er his full o'erflowing heart
Sought *warmer* blessings to impart;
If *more* for any friends he pray'd,
For showers of mercies on their head,
It was for this distinguish'd place,
The scene of his most foul disgrace!
How does his fervent spirit burn
Their recent kindness to return!
What terms, what arguments employ,
To fill their hearts with holy joy!
What consolation from above;
What comfort from eternal love;
From God's blest Spirit drawing nigh;
Communion sweet, communion high!
Such strong persuasions must controul,
Convince the reason, melt the soul!
He urges motives as a law,
Which some would think deter not draw.
'Take as a *gift* reserv'd for you,
Power to believe and *suffer* too!'

The good Colossians now stand forth,
Excell'd by none in grace and worth,
Behold the saint his touchstone give,
To try with Christ if Christians live.
Oh, let your aspirations rise,
Nor stop at aught beneath the skies.
Your fruitless cares no more bestow
On perishable things below.
From sordid joys indignant fly;
Know, avarice is idolatry,

False worship 's not confin'd alone
To images of wood and stone;
Whate'er you grasp with eager hold,
Honours or pleasures, fame or gold;
These are your idols, these you'll find,
Possess your soul, engross your mind.
Heaven will with idols have no part:
That robs your God which steals your heart.

The THESSALONIANS next appear,
The bountiful and the sincere.
Here precept pure and doctrine sound,
In sweet accordance may be found.
Mark the triumphant Christian's voice,
'Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!'
As he would echo back to heaven,
The holy transport grace had given.

Young TIMOTHY is on record,
Who sought betimes to know the Lord.
Here true maternal love we find,
Which form'd the heart, and taught the mind.
Here may the British mother learn,
Her child's best interests to discern;
Her faithfulness to God best prove,
And best evince her Christian love.
Paul, while his pupil's good he seeks,
Thro' him to unborn pastors speaks:
'Reprove, exhort, be earnest still
Your high commission to fulfil;
Watch, labour, pray; in these consist
The works of an Evangelist.'
As Bishop, he commands again,
'Commit the trust to faithful men;'
Bids him observe, that those who preach
Need to *remind* as well as *teach*
To raise his soul to solemn thought,
God's judgment is before him brought;
When seated in tremendous state,
The blest and only Potentate,
The members of the living head
Shall meet the Judge of quick and dead,
Then Christ his faithful sons shall own,
Who bore his Cross, shall wear his Crown.

Next TITUS, youthful yet discreet,
First Bishop of the Isle of Crete.
Here prudent Paul, divines to show
They ought their people's faults to know,
Quotes their own poet, to declare
The Cretans sensual, insincere.
Such knowledge teaches to reprove
The erring, and the just to love.
Now in the gentle tone of friend
See him to private life descend;
The sober duties to impart,
Which grace the life, and mend the heart.
Shows on what consecrated ground
Domestic happiness is found;
Warns the fair convert not to roam:
The truest joys are found at home;
'Tis there the chaste obedient mind
Will life's best charm confer, and find.

Follows PHILEMON, who forgave,
Yea, honour'd, his converted slave.

Paul to the HEBREWS writes:—O, then,
What inspiration guides his pen!
Let wits revile, let Atheists rail,
Such evidence shall never fail,
As the first pages here supply
Of Christ's unclouded Deity.
As he proceeds, to faith 'tis given
To soar on loftier wing to heaven.
See here the doctrine prov'd by facts,
Belief exhibited in acts.
See conquering Faith's heroic hand
Church-militant in order stand!
The Red-Sea passengers we view,
Jephtha and Gideon, Barak too.
Had we all time, the time would fail
Of heroes to record the tale,
Whose deeds their attestation bring
That faith is no ideal thing.
Say, could ideal faith aspire
To quench the violence of fire?
To stop the famish'd lion's rage!
With dread temptations to engage;
All deaths despise, all dangers dare,
With no support, save God and prayer?
'Tis pride,' the sneering Sceptic cries,
'Rank pride, the martyr's strength supplies:
His fortitude by praise is fed,
Praise is Religion's daily bread.
The public show, the attendant crowd,
The admiration fond and loud;
The gaze, the noise his soul sustains,
Applause the opiate of his pains;
Withdraw the charm spectators bring,
And torture is no joyous thing.'
Thy triumphs, Faith, we need not take
Alone from the blest martyr's stake;
In scenes obscure, no less we see
That faith is a reality.
An evidence of things not seen,
A substance firm whereon to lean,
Go search the cottager's lone room,
The day scarce piercing thro' the gloom:
The Christian on his dying bed
Unknown, unletter'd, hardly fed;
No flatt'ring witnesses attend,
To tell how glorious was his end,
Save in the book of life, his name
Unheard, he never dreamt of fame.
No human consolation near,
No voice to soothe, no friend to cheer.
Of every earthly stay bereft,
And nothing but his SAVIOUR left.
Fast sinking to his kindred dust,
The Word of Life is still his trust.
The joy God's promises impart
Lies like a cordial at his heart;
Unshaken faith its strength supplies,
He loves, believes, adores, and dies.

The great Apostle ceases;—then
To holy JAMES resigns the pen;
James, full of faith and love, no doubt,
The practical and the devout.
Ye rich, the saint indignant cried,
Curs'd are all riches misapplied!
Abhorr'd the wealth which useless lies,
When merit claims, or hunger cries!
The wise alike with scorn behold
The hoarded as the squander'd gold.
In man opposing passions meet
The liberal feelings to defeat:
PLEASURE and AVARICE both agree
To stop the tide of charity:
Tho' each detests the other's deeds

The same effect from both proceeds:
Curs'd is the gold, or sav'd, or spent,
Which God for mercy's portion meant:
Chemists in transmutation bold
Attempt to make base metals gold.
Let Christians then transmute their pelf
To something nobler than itself;
On heaven their rescued wealth bestow,
And send it home before they go:
He will the blest deposit own:
Who seals the pardon, gives the crown.

Peter the bold, who perils hail'd
Who promis'd much, and much he fail'd;
Peter, the generous rash, and warm,
Who lov'd his Lord, but shrunk from harm;
Peter the coward and the brave,
Denying him he wish'd to save;
O Peter, what reproachful word,
What dagger keen, what two-edg'd sword,
Could pierce thy bosom like the last,
Last look thy Saviour on thee cast?
That speechless eloquence divine,
No pen, no pencil can define.
Peter, how bitter were thy tears!
Remorse absorb'd thy guilty fears.
Still, Peter, did thy risen Lord,
Conqueror of death, his grace afford;
Not to the men of faith approv'd,
Not to the saint whom Jesus loved.
It was to heal thy broken heart,
Comfort to anguish to impart:
Yes—'twas to Peter that by name
Alone the glorious tidings came.
Now mark the wond'rous power of grace!
His character has chang'd its face;
The noblest attitude assumes:
Who now on his own strength presumes?
Where now his fears? we only see
True Christian magnanimity.
Who now the foremost to declare
Their grand commission? who to dare
The standard of the cross to raise,
And his ador'd Redeemer praise?
Applause he scorn'd however true,
But gave the glory where 'twas due,
With what majestic grace he rose,
Fearless of all surrounding foes;
Brought the old Scriptures to apply
His argument from prophecy:
From miracles which well accord,
He prov'd that Jesus was the Lord.
When requisite in some hard case
To check deceit, unmask the base,
'Twas Peter's office: see him dare
Seize the prevaricating pair.*
One question stops the fraudful breath,
And blasts them both with instant death.
Ask you the truth he lov'd to teach,
The theme selected first to preach?
Repentance!—What he felt he taught:
A mighty change his preaching wrought
The fruits were equal to the zeal,
They best can teach who deepest feel.
Crown'd were his labours: Peter died
A martyr to the Crucified.

With love his pure Epistles fraught,
John teaches what his gospel taught;
He needs no argument to prove,
Save his own heart, that God is love.

Jude, what his letter wants in length,
Redeems by energy and strength.
Confirms the truth from revelation
Of Enoch's marvellous translation.
Hear him in awful terms declare,
The mis'ries which the ungodly share!
Clouds without water, dark yet dry,
Spots in the feasts of charity;
Trees withering, destitute of fruit,
Exterminated branch and root.
Now in its pomp and dread array,
He summons to the judgment-day.
O, what conflicting trains of thought,
Has this amazing image brought!
O, what a fire this spark has kindled,
Of terror and of transport mingled!
Spirits who lost their first estate
Retaining their immortal hate.
The bold impenitent shall hear
His doom; his sentence black despair.
The hypocrite detected lie,
Naked, laid bare to every eye.
To crown the horrors which await,
All feel the justice of their fate.
Their fears their punishment foretell,
And conscience does the work of Hell.
They as the achme of their pain,
Acquit their Judge themselves arraign.
No shelter now from rocks or caves,
No refuge from the fiery waves;
What wonder, wildly if they call
The mountains on their heads to fall.
Then see the Man of Sorrows found,
The Lord of life and glory crown'd.
Jesus appears, as Enoch paints,
Surrounded by ten thousand saints.
Lo! heaven and earth their tribute bring
Of glory to the eternal king!
Angels, archangels, each degree
Of heaven's celestial hierarchy!
The noble martyr's valiant band
Before their conq'ring Captain stand!
The goodly prophets here behold
Fulfill'd the scenes they once foretold.
Their Lord encircling, here we see
The Apostles' glorious company:
Heaven kindly vails from human sight
All that dread day will bring to light.

THE REVELATION.

The saint of Patmos last we meet,
And revelation stands complete.
In this bright vision, tho' he brings
Scenes of unutterable things;
He tempers heaven's effulgent light,
Too powerful else for mortal sight.
Partly by negatives are shown
Joys which hereafter shall be known:
Suffering, and sin, and death, are o'er,
For former things are seen no more;
No sorrow felt, and heav'd no sigh,
And tears are wip'd from every eye.
Yet not by negative alone,
Consummate glory shall be known;
Not only shall be found no night,
The Lamb himself shall be the light.

* Ananias and Sapphira.

Sun, moon, and stars, shall fade away,
Lost in one cloudless, endless day;
Redemption finish'd, sin forgiven,
'Tis God's own presence makes it heaven.
Of future bliss, if such the sum,
Then come, Lord JESUS! quickly come!

SACRED DRAMAS:

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

THE SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE BIBLE.

All the books of the Bible are either most admirable and exalted pieces of poetry, or the best materials in the world for it.—*Cowley.*

TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF BEAUFORT,

THESE SACRED DRAMAS ARE, WITH THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT, INSCRIBED:

As, among the many amiable and distinguished qualities which adorn her mind, and add lustre to her rank, her excellence in the maternal character gives a peculiar propriety to her protection of this little work; written with an humble wish to promote the love of piety and virtue in young persons,

By her grace's most obedient, most obliged, and most humble servant,
HANNAH MORE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I AM as ready as the most rigid critic to confess, that nothing can be more simple and inartificial than the plans of the following dramas. In the construction of them I have seldom ventured to introduce any person* of my own creation: still less did I imagine myself at liberty to invent circumstances. I reflected, with awe, that *the place whereon I stood was holy ground.* All the latitude I permitted myself was, to make such persons as I selected act under such circumstances as I found, and express such sentiments as, in my humble judgment, appeared not unnatural to their characters and situations. Some of the speeches are so long as to retard the action; for I rather aspired after moral instruction than the purity of dramatic composition. I am aware that it may be brought as an objection, that I have now and then made my Jewish characters speak too much like Christians, as it may be questioned whether I have not occasionally ascribed to them a degree of light and knowledge greater than they probably had the means of possessing: but I was more anxious in consulting the advantage of my youthful readers by leading them on to higher religious views, than in securing to myself the reputation of critical exactness.

It will be thought that I have chosen, perhaps, the least important passage in the eventful life of David, for the foundation of the drama which bears his name. Yet even in this his first exploit, the sacred historian represents him as exhibiting no mean lesson of modesty, humility, courage, and piety. Many will think that the introduction of Saul's daughter would have added to the effect of the piece: and I have no doubt but that it would have made the intrigue more complicated and amusing had this drama been intended for the stage. There, all that is tender, and all that is terrible in the passions, find a proper place. But I write for the young, in whom it will be always time enough to have the passions awakened; I write for a class of readers, to whom it is not easy to accommodate one's subject,† so as to be at once useful and interesting.

The amiable poet,‡ from whom I have taken my motto, after showing the superiority of the sacred over the profane historics, some instances of which I have noticed in my introduction, concludes with the following remark, which I may apply to myself with far more propriety than it was used by the author:—'I am far from assuming to myself to have fulfilled the duty of this weighty undertaking; and I shall be ambitious of no other fruit from this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully.'

* Never indeed, except in Daniel, and that of necessity; as the Bible furnishes no more than two persons, Daniel and Darius, and these were not sufficient to carry on the business of the piece.

† It would not be easy, nor perhaps proper, to introduce sacred tragedies on the English stage. The pious would think it profane, while the profane would think it dull. Yet the excellent Racine, in a profligate country and a voluptuous court, ventured to adapt the story of *Athalia* to the French theatre; and it remains to us a glorious monument of its author's courageous piety, while it exhibits the perfection of the dramatic art.

‡ Cowley.

INTRODUCTION.

O for the sacred energy which struck
The harp of Jesse's son! or for a spark
Of that celestial flame which touch'd the lips
Of bless'd Isaiah:* when the Seraphim
With living fire descended, and his soul
From sin's pollution purg'd! or one faint ray,
If human things to heavenly I may join,
Of that pure spirit which inflam'd the breast
Of Milton, God's own poet! when retir'd
In fair enthusiastic vision wrapt,
The *nightly visitant* deign'd bless his couch
With inspiration, such as never flow'd
From Acidale or Aganippe's fount!
Then, when the sacred fire within him burnt,
He spake as man or angels might have spoke,
When man was pure, and angels were his guests.
It will not be.—Nor prophet's burning zeal,
Nor muse of fire, nor yet to sweep the strings
With sacred energy, to me belongs;
Nor with Miltonic hand to touch the chords
That wake to ecstacy. From me, alas!
The secret source of harmony is hid;
The magic pow'rs which catch the ravish'd soul
In melody's sweet maze, and the clear streams
Which to pure fancy's yet untasted springs
Enchanted lead. Of these I little know!
Yet, all unknowing, dare thy aid invoke,
Spirit of truth! to bless these worthless lays:
Nor impious is the hope; for thou hast said,
That none who ask in faith should ask in vain.
You I invoke not now, ye fabled Nine!
I not invoke you though you well were sought
In Greece and Latium, sought by deathless bards.
Whose syren song enchants; and shall enchant
Through time's wide circling round, tho' false their faith,
And less than human were the gods they sung.
Though false their faith they taught the best they knew;
And (blush, O Christians!) liv'd above their faith.
They would have bless'd the beam and hail'd the day
Which chas'd the moral darkness from their souls.
O! had their minds receiv'd the clearer ray
Of Revelation, they had learn'd to scorn
Their rites impure, their less than human gods,
Their wild mythology's fantastic maze.
Pure Plato! how had thy chaste spirit hail'd
A faith so fitted to thy moral sense!
What hadst thou felt to see the fair romance
Of high imagination, the bright dream
Of thy pure fancy, more than realiz'd!
Sublime enthusiast! thou hadst blest a scheme
Fair, good, and perfect. How had thy wrapt soul
Caught fire, and burnt with a diviner flame!
For e'en thy fair idea ne'er conceiv'd
Such plenitude of bliss, such boundless love,
As Deity made visible to sense.
Unhappy Brutus! philosophic mind!
Great 'midst the errors of the Stoic school!
How had thy kindling spirit joy'd to find
That thy lov'd virtue was no empty name:
Nor hadst thou met the vision at Philippi;
Nor hadst thou sheath'd thy bloody dagger's point
Or in the breast of Cæsar or thy own.
The pagan page how far more wise than ours!
They with the gods they worshipp'd grac'd their song:
Our song we grace with gods we disbelieve:
Retain the manners but reject the creed.
Shall fiction only raise poetic flame,
And shall no altar blaze, O Truth, to thee?
Shall falsehood only please and fable charm?
And shall eternal truth neglected lie?
Because immortal, slighted, or profan'd?
Truth has our rev'rence only, not our love;
Our praise, but not our hearts: a deity,
Confess'd, but shunn'd; acknowledged, not ador'd;
Alarm'd we dread her penetrating beams:
She comes too near us, and too brightly shines.
Why shun to make our duty our delight?
Let *pleasure* be the motive, disallow
All high incentives drawn from God's command;
Where shall we trace, through all the page profane,
A livelier pleasure and a purer source
Of innocent delight, than the fair book
Of holy truth presents? for ardent youth,
The sprightly narrative! for years mature,
The moral document, in sober robe
Of grave philosophy array'd: which all
Had heard with admiration, had embrac'd
With rapture, had the shades of Academe,
Or the learn'd Porch produc'd it:—Tomes had then
Been multiplied on tomes, to draw the veil
Of graceful allegory, to unfold
Some hidden source of beauty now not felt!
Do not the pow'rs of soul-enchanting song,
Strong imagery, bold figure, every charm
Of eastern flight sublime, apt metaphor,
And all the graces in thy lovely train,
Divine simplicity! assemble all
In Sion's songs, and bold Isaiah's strain?
Why should the classic eye delight to trace
The tale corrupted from its prime pure source;
How Pyrrha and the fam'd Thessalian king
Restor'd the ruin'd race of lost mankind:
Yet turn, incurious, from the patriarch sav'd
The rescued remnant of a delug'd world?
Why are we taught, delighted to recount
Alcides' labours, yet neglect to note
Heroic Samson 'midst a life of toil
Herculean? Pain and peril marking both,
A life eventful and disasterous death.
Can all the tales which Grecian story yields;
Can all the names the Roman page records,
Of wond'rous friendship and surpassing love
Can gallant Theseus and his brave compeer
Orestes and the partner of his toils;
Achates and his friend: Euryalus
And blooming Nisus, pleasant in their lives,
And undivided by the stroke of death;
Can each, can all, a lovelier picture yield
Of virtuous friendship: can they all present
A tenderness more touching than the love
Of Jonathan and David?—Speak, ye young!
Who, undebauched as yet by fashion's lore,
And unsophisticate, unbiass'd judge:
Say, is your quick attention more arous'd

* Isaiah, chap. vi.

By the red plagues which wasted smitten Thebes,
Than heav'n's avenging hand on Pharaoh's host?
Or do the vagrant Trojans, driven by fate
On adverse shores successive, yield a theme
More grateful to the eager appetite
Of young impatience, than the wand'ring tribes
The Hebrew leader through the desert led?
The beauteous maid,* (though tender is the tale;)
Whose guiltless blood on Aulis' altar stream'd,
Smites not the bosom with a softer pang
Than her in fate how sadly similar,
The Gileaditish virgin—victims both
Of vows unsanctify'd.——
Such are the lorely themes which court the bard,
Scarce yet essay'd in verse—for verse how meet!
While heav'n-descended song, forgetting oft
Her sacred dignity and high descent,
Debases her fair origin; oft spreads
Corruption's deadly bane, pollutes the heart
Of innocence, and with unhallow'd hand
Presents the poison'd chalice, to the brim
Fill'd with delicious ruin, minist'ring
The unwholesome rapture to the fever'd taste,
While its fell venom, with malignant pow'r,
Strikes at the root of Virtue, with'ring all
Her vital energy. Oh! for some balm
Of sov'reign power, to raise the drooping Muse
To all the health of virtue! to infuse

* Iphigenia.

A gen'rous warmth, to rouse an holy zeal
And give her high conceptions of herself,
Her dignity, her worth, her aim, her end!
For me, eternal Spirit, let thy word
My path illume! O thou compassionate God!
Thou know'st our frame, thou know'st we are but dust;
From dust a Seraph's zeal thou wilt not seek,
Nor wilt thou ask an angel's purity.
But hear, and hearing pardon; as I strive,
Though with a feeble voice and flagging wing
A glowing heart, but pow'rless hand, to paint
The faith of favour'd man to heav'n; to sing
The ways inscrutable of heav'n to man;
May I, by thy celestial guidance led,
Fix deep in my own heart the truths I teach!
In my own life transcribe whate'er of good
To others I propose! and by thy rule
Correct th' irregular,* reform the wrong,
Exalt the low, and brighten the obscure!
Still may I note, how all th' agreeing parts
Of this consummate system join to frame
One fair, one finish'd, one harmonious whole!
Trace the close links which form the perfect chain
In beautiful connexion; mark the scale
Whose nice gradations, with progression true,
For ever rising, end in Deity!

* What in me is dark
Illumine! What is low, raise and support!
PARADISE LOST.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

A SACRED DRAMA.

Let me assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.—*Paradise Lost.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HEBREW WOMEN.

JOCHEBED, mother of Moses.
MIRIAM, his sister.

EGYPTIANS.

The PRINCESS, king Pharaoh's daughter.
MELITA; and other attendants.

Scene—On the banks of the Nile.

This subject is taken from the second chapter of the book of Exodus.

PART I.

JOCHEBED, MIRIAM.

Joch. Why was my pray'r accepted? why did heaven
In anger hear me, when I ask'd a son?
Ye dames of Egypt! ye triumphant mothers!
You no imperial tyrant marks for ruin;
You are not doom'd to see the babes you bore,
The babes you fondly nurture, bleed before you!
You taste the transport of a mother's love,
Without a mother's anguish! wretched Israel!
Can I forbear to mourn the different lot
Of thy sad daughters!—Why did God's own hand
Rescue his chosen race by Joseph's care?
Joseph! th' elected instrument of heaven,
Decreed to save illustrious Abraham's sons,
What time the famine rag'd in Canaan's land.
Israel, who then was spar'd, must perish now!
Thou great mysterious Pow'r, who hast involv'd
Thy wise decrees in darkness, to perplex
The pride of human wisdom, to confound
The daring scrutiny, and prove, the faith
Of thy presuming creatures! hear me now:
O vindicate thy honour, clear this doubt,
Teach me to trace this maze of Providence:
Why save the fathers, if the sons must perish?
Mir. Ah me, my mother! whence these floods of grief?
Joch. My son! my son! I cannot speak the rest;
Ye who have sons can only know my fondness

Ye who have lost them, or who fear to lose,
Can only know my pangs! none else can gucss them.
A mother's sorrows cannot be conceiv'd
But by a mother—would I were not one!
Mir. With earnest pray'rs thou didst request this son,
And heaven has granted him.
Joch. O sad estate
Of human wretchedness; so weak is man,
So ignorant and blind, that did not God
Sometimes withhold in mercy what we ask,
We should be ruin'd at our own request.
Too well thou know'st, my child, the stern decree
Of Egypt's cruel king, hard-hearted Pharaoh;
That every male, of Hebrew mother born,
Must die! Oh! do I live to tell it thee!
Must die a bloody death! My child, my son,
My youngest born my darling must be slain!
Mir. The helpless innocent! and must he die?
Joch. No: if a mother's tears, a mother's prayers,
A mother's fond precautions can prevail,
He shall not die. I have a thought my Miriam,
And sure the God of mercies who inspir'd,
Will bless the secret purpose of my soul,
To save his precious life.
Mir. Hop'st thou that Pharaoh—
Joch. I have no hope in Pharaoh, much in God;
Much in the Rock of Ages.
Mir. Think, O think,
What perils thou already hast incurr'd,
And shun the greater which may yet remain,
Three months, three dangerous months thou hast preserv'd
Thy infant's life, and in thy house conceal'd him!
Should Pharaoh know!
Joch. Oh! let the tyrant know,
And feel what he inflicts! Yes, hear me, heaven!
Send thy right aiming thunderbolts—but hush,
My impious murmurs! is it not thy will;
Thou, infinite in mercy? Thou permitt'st
The seeming evil for some latent good.
Yes, I will laud thy grace, and bless thy goodness
For what I have, and not arraign thy wisdom
For what I fear to lose. O, I will bless thee
That Aaron will be spar'd; that my first born
Lives safe and undisturbed! that he was giv'n me
Before this impious persecution rag'd!
Mir. And yet who knows, but the fell tyrant's rage
May reach *his* precious life.
Joch. I fear for him.
For thee, for all. A doating parent lives
In many lives; through many a nerve she feels;
From child to child the quick affections spread,
Forever wand'ring, yet forever fix'd.
Nor does division weaken, nor the force
Of constant operation e'er exhaust
Parental love. All other passions change
With changing circumstances; rise or fall,
Dependent on their object; claim returns;
Live on reciprocation, and expire
Unfed by hope. A mother's fondness reigns
Without a rival, and without an end,
Mir. But say what heav'n inspires to save thy son?
Joch. Since the dear fatal morn which gave him birth,
I have revolv'd in my distracted mind
Each means to save his life: and many a thought
Which fondness prompted, prudence has oppos'd
As perilous and rash. With these poor hands
I've fram'd a little ark of slender reeds;
With pitch and slime I have secur'd the sides.
In this frail cradle I intend to lay
My little helpless infant, and expose him
Upon the banks of the Nile.
Mir. 'Tis full of danger.
Joch. 'Tis danger to expose, and death to keep him.
Mir. Yet, oh! reflect. Should the fierce crocodile,
The native and the tyrant of the Nile,
Seize the defenceless infant!
Joch. Oh forbear!
Spare my fond heart. Yet not the crocodile,
Nor all the deadly monsters of the deep,
To me are half so terrible as Pharaoh,
That heathen king, that royal murderer!
Mir. Should he escape, which yet I dare not hope,
Each sea-born monster, yet the winds and waves
He cannot 'scape.
Joch. Know, God is every where;
Not to one narrow, partial spot confin'd:
No, not to chosen Israel: he extends
Through all the vast infinitude of space:
At his command the furious tempests rise—
The blasting of the breath of his displeasure.
He tells the world of waters when to roar;
And, at his bidding, winds and seas are calm:
In him, not in an arm of flesh, I trust;
In him, whose promise never yet has fail'd,
I place my confidence.
Mir. What must I do?
Command thy daughter; for thy words have wak'd
An holy boldness in my youthful breast.
Joch. Go then, my Miriam, go, and take the infant.
Buried in harmless slumbers there he lies:
Let me not see him—spare my heart that pang.
Yet sure, one little look may be indulg'd,
And I may feast my fondness with his smiles,
And snatch one last, last kiss.—No more my heart;
That rapture would be fatal—I should keep [him.
I could not doom to death the babe I clasp'd
Did ever mother kill her sleeping boy?
I dare not hazard it—The task be thine.
Oh! do not wake my child; remove him softly;
And gently lay him on the river's brink.
Mir. Did those magicians, whom the sons of Egypt
Consult and think all-potent, join their skill
And was it great as Egypt's sons believe;
Yet all their secret wizard arts combin'd,
To save this little ark of bulrushes,
Thus fearfully expos'd, could not effect it.
Their spells, their incantations, and dire charms
Could not preserve it.
Joch. Know this ark is charm'd

With incantations Pharaoh ne'er employ'd;
With spells, which impious Egypt never knew:
With invocations to the living God,
I twisted every slender reed together,
And with a pray'r did every ozier weave.
Mir. I go.
Joch. Yet e'er thou go'st, observe me well;
When thou hast laid him in his wat'ry bed,
O leave him not: but at a distance wait,
And mark what Heaven's high will determines for him.
Lay him among the flags on yonder beach,
Just where the royal gardens meet the Nile.
I dare not follow him, Suspicion's eye
Would note my wild demeanor! Miriam, yes,
The mother's fondness would betray the child.
Farewell! God of my fathers. Oh, protect him!

PART II.

Enter MIRIAM *after having deposited the child.*

Mir. YES, I have laid him in his wat'ry bed,
His wat'ry grave, I fear!—I tremble still;
It was a cruel task—still I must weep!
But ah, my mother! who shall sooth thy griefs!
The flags and sea-weeds will awhile sustain
Their precious load; but it must sink ere long!
Sweet babe, farewell! Yet think not I will leave thee:
No, I will watch thee till the greedy waves
Devour thy little bark: I'll sit me down,
And sing to thee, sweet babe; thou can'st not hear
But 'twill amuse me, while I watch thy fate.
[*She sits down on a bank, and sings.*

SONG.

I.

THOU, who canst make the feeble strong,
O God of Israel, hear my song!
Not mine such notes as Egypt's daughter's raise;
'Tis thee, O God of Hosts, I strive to praise.

II.

Ye winds, the servants of the Lord,
Ye waves, obedient to his word,
Oh spare the babe committed to your trust;
And Israel shall confess the Lord is just!

III.

Though doom'd to find an early grave,
This infant, Lord, thy power can save,
And he, whose death 's decreed by Pharaoh s hand,
May rise a prophet to redeem the land.
[*She rises and looks out.*

What female form bends thitherward her steps?
Of royal port she seems; perhaps some friend,
Rais'd by the guardian care of bounteous Heaven,
To prop the falling house of Levi.—Soft!
I'll listen unperceiv'd; these trees will hide me.
[*She stands behind.*

Enter the PRINCESS OF EGYPT, *attended by a train of ladies.*

Prin. No farther, virgins, here I mean to rest.
To taste the pleasant coolness of the breeze;
Perhaps to bathe in this translucent stream.
Did not our holy law* enjoin th' ablution
Frequent and regular, it still were needful
To mitigate the fervours of our clime.
Melita, stay—the rest at distance wait.
[*They all go out, except one*

The PRINCESS *looks out.*

Sure, or I much mistake, or I perceive
Upon the sedgy margin of the Nile
A chest; entangled in the reeds it seems:
Discern'st thou aught?
Mel. Something, but what I know not.
Prin. Go and examine what this sight may mean. [*Exit maid.*

MIRIAM *behind.*

O blest, beyond my hopes! he is discover'd;
My brother will be sav'd!—who is the stranger?
Ah! 'tis the princess, cruel Pharaoh's daughter.
If she resemble her inhuman sire,
She must be cruel too; yet fame reports her
Most merciful and mild.—Great Lord of all,
By whose good Spirit bounteous thoughts are given
And deeds of love perform'd—be gracious now
And touch her soul with mercy!

Re-enter MELITA.

Prin. Well, Melita!
Hast thou discover'd what the vessel is?
Mel. Oh, princess, I have seen the strangest sight!
Within the vessel lies a sleeping babe,
A fairer infant have I never seen.
Prin. Who knows but some unhappy Hebrew woman
Has thus expos'd her infant, to evade
The stern decree of my too cruel sire.
Unhappy mothers! oft my heart has bled
In secret anguish o'er your slaughter'd sons,
Powerless to save, yet hating to destroy.
Mel. Should this be so, my princess knows the danger.
Prin. No danger should deter from acts of mercy.

MIRIAM *behind.*

A thousand blessings on her princely head;
Prin. Too much the sons of Jacob have endur'd
From Royal Pharaoh's unrelenting hate;
Too much our house has crush'd their alien race.
Is 't not enough that cruel task-masters
Grind them by hard oppression? not enough
That iron bondage bows their spirits down?
Is 't not enough my sire his greatness owes,
His palaces, his fanes magnificent,
Those structures which the world with wonder views,
To much insulted Israel's patient race?
To them his growing cities owe their splendour:
Their toils fair Rameses and Pythom built;
And shall we fill the measure of our crimes,
And crown our guilt with murder? and shall I
Sanction the sin I hate? forbid it, Mercy!

* The ancient Egyptians used to wash their bodies four times every twenty-four hours.

Mel. I know thy royal father fears the strength
Of this still growing race, who flourish more
The more they are oppress'd: he dreads their numbers.
Prin. Apis forbid! Pharaoh afraid of Israel!
Yet should this outcast race, this hapless people
Ere grow to such a formidable greatness,
(Which all the gods avert whom Egypt worship)
This infant's life can never serve their cause,
Nor can his single death prevent their greatness.
Mel. Trust not to that vain hope. By weakest means
And most unlikely instrument, full oft
Are great events produc'd. This rescued child
Perhaps may live to serve his upstart race
More than an host.
Prin. How ill it does beseem
Thy tender years and gentle womanhood,
To steel thy breast to Pity's sacred touch!
So weak, so unprotected is our sex,
So constantly expos'd, so very helpless,
That did not Heaven itself enjoin compassion,
Yet human policy should make us kind,
Lest in the rapid turn of Fortune's wheel,
We live to need the pity we refuse.
Yes, I will save him—Mercy, thou hast conquered!
Lead on—and from the rushes we'll remove
The feeble ark which cradles this poor babe.
[*The* PRINCESS *and her maid go out.*

MIRIAM *comes forward.*

How poor were words to speak my boundless joy!
The princess will protect him; bless her, Heaven!
[*She looks out after the princess, and describes her action.*
With what impatient steps she seeks the shore!
Now she approaches where the ark is laid!
With what compassion, with what angel sweetness,
She bends to look upon the infant's face!
She takes his little hand in hers—he wakes—
She smiles upon him—hark, alas! he cries;
Weep on, sweet babe! weep on, till thou hast touch'd
Each chord of pity, waken'd every sense
Of melting sympathy, and stolen her soul!
She takes him in her arms—O lovely princess!
How goodness heightens beauty! now she clasps him
With fondness to her heart, she gives him now
With tender caution to her damsel's arms:
She points her to the palace, and again
This way the princess bends her gracious steps;
The virgin train retire and bear the child.

Re-enter the PRINCESS.

Prin. Did ever innocence and infant beauty
Plead with such dumb but powerful eloquence?
If I, a stranger, feel these soft emotions,
What must the mother who expos'd him feel!
Go, fetch a woman of the Hebrew race,
That she may nurse the babe: and, by her garb,
Lo, such a one is here!
Mir. Princess, all hail!
Forgive the bold intrusion of thy servant,
Who stands a charm'd spectator of thy goodness.
Prin. I have redeem'd an infant from the waves,
Whom I intend to nurture as mine own.
Mir. My transports will betray me! [*aside.*
Gen'rous Princess!
Prin. Know'st thou a matron of the Hebrew race
To whom I may confide him?
Mir. Well I know
A prudent matron of the house of Levi;
Her name Jochebed, is the wife of Amram;
Of gentle manners, fam'd throughout her tribe
For soft humanity; full well I know
That she will rear him with a mother's love.
[*Aside.*] Oh truly spoke! a mother's love indeed!
To her despairing arms I mean to give
This precious trust: the nurse shall be the mother!
Prin. With speed conduct this matron to the palace.
Yes, I will raise him up to princely greatness,
And he shall be my son; I'll have him train'd
By choicest sages, in the deepest lore
Of Egypt's sapient son;—his name be *Moses*,
For I have drawn him from the perilous flood.
[*They go out. She kneels.*
Thou Great unseen! who causest gentle deeds,
And smil'st on what thou causest; thus I bless thee.
That thou did'st deign consult the tender make
Of yielding human hearts, when thou ordain'dst
Humanity a virtue! did'st not make it
A rigorous exercise to counteract
Some strong desire within; to war and fight
Against the powers of Nature; but did'st bend
The nat'ral bias of the soul to mercy:
Then mad'st that mercy duty! Gracious Power!
Mad'st the keen rapture exquisite as right;
Beyond the joys of sense; as pleasure sweet,
As reason vigorous, and as instinct strong!

PART III.

Enter JOCHEBED.

I've almost reach'd the place—with cautious steps
I must approach the spot where he is laid,
Lest from the royal gardens any 'spy me:
—Poor babe! ere this the pressing calls of hunger
Have broke thy short repose; the chilling waves,
Ere this have drench'd thy little shiv'ring limbs.
What must my babe have suffer'd!—No one sees me!
But soft, does no one listen!—Ah! how hard,
How very hard for fondness to be prudent!
Now is the moment to embrace and feed him,
[*She looks out*
Where's Miriam? she has left her little charge,
Perhaps through fear; perhaps she was detected.
How wild is thought! how terrible is conjecture!
A mother's fondness frames a thousand fears,
With thrilling nerve feels every real ill,

And shapes imagin'd miseries into being.
[*She looks towards the river.*
Ah me! where is he? soul-distracting sight!
He is not there—he 's lost, he 's gone, he 's drown'd!
Toss'd by each beating surge my infant floats.
Cold, cold, and wat'ry is thy grave, my child!
O no—I see the ark—transporting sight!
[*She goes towards it.*
I have it here—Alas, the ark is empty!
The casket 's left, the precious gem is gone!
You spar'd him, pitying spirits of the deep!
But vain your mercy; some insatiate beast,
Cruel as Pharaoh, took the life you spar'd—
And I shall never, never see my boy!

Enter MIRIAM.

Joch. Come and lament with me thy brother's loss!
Mir. Come and adore with me the God of Jacob!
Joch. Miriam—the child is dead!
Mir. He lives! he lives!
Joch. Impossible—Oh, do not mock my grief!
See'st thou that empty vessel?
Mir. From that vessel
Th' Egyptian princess took him.
Joch. Pharaoh's daughter?
Then still he will be slain: a bloodier death
Will terminate his woes.
Mir. His life is safe;
For know, she means to rear him as her own.
Joch. [*Falls on her knees in rapture.*
To God, the Lord, the glory be ascrib'd!
O magnify'd forever be thy might
Who mock'st all human forethought! who o'errulest
The hearts of all sinners to perform thy work,
Defeating their own purpose! who canst plant
Unlook'd-for mercy in a heathen's heart,
And from the depth of evil bring forth good?
[*She rises.*
Mir. O blest event, beyond our warmest hopes!
Joch. What! shall my son be nurtur'd in a court,
In princely grandeur bred? taught every art
And ev'ry wond'rous science Egypt knows?
Yet ah! I tremble Miriam; should he learn,
With Egypt's polish'd arts her baneful faith!
O worse exchange for death! yes, should he learn
In yon proud palace to disown *His* hand
Who thus has sav'd him: should he e'er embrace
(As sure he will, if bred in Pharaoh's court)
The gross idolatries which Egypt owns,
Her graven images, her brutish gods,
Then shall I wish he had not been preserv'd
To shame his fathers and deny his faith.
Mir. Then to dispel thy fears and crown thy joy,
Hear farther wonders—Know, the gen'rous princess
To thine own care thy darling child commits.
Joch. Speak, while my joy will give me leave to listen! [here,
Mir. By her commission'd, thou behold'st me
To seek a matron of the Hebrew race
To nurse him: thou, my mother, art that matron
I said I knew thee well; that thou would'st rear him,
E'en with a mother's fondness; she who bare him
(I told the princess) would not love him more.
Joch. Fountain of Mercy! whose pervading eye
Can look within and read what passes there,
Accept my thoughts for thanks! I have no words.
My soul, o'erfraught with gratitude, rejects
The aid of language—Lord! behold my heart.
Mir. Yes, thou shalt pour into his infant mind
The purest precepts of the purest faith.
Joch. O! I will fill his tender soul with virtue,
And warm his bosom with devotion's flame!
Aid me celestial Spirit! with thy grace,
And be my labours with thy influence crown'd!
Without it they were vain. Then, then, my Miriam,
When he is furnish'd 'gainst the evil day,
With God's whole armour,* girt with sacred truth,
And as a breastplate wearing righteousness,
Arm'd with the Spirit of God, the shield of faith,
And with the helmet of salvation crown'd,
Inur'd to watching and dispos'd to prayer;
Then may I send him to a dangerous court,
And safely trust him in a perilous world,
Too full of tempting snares and fond delusions!
Mir. May bounteous Heav'n thy pious cares reward!
Joch. O Amram! O my husband! when thou com'st,
Wearied at night, to rest thee from the toils
Impos'd by haughty Pharaoh, what a tale
Have I to tell thee! Yes: thy darling son
Was lost, and is restor'd; was dead, and lives!
Mir. How joyful shall we spend the live-long night
In praises to Jehovah; who thus mocks
All human foresight, and converts the means
Of seeming ruin into great deliverance!
Joch. Had not my child been doom'd to such strange perils
As a fond mother trembles to recal,
He had not been preserv'd.
Mir. And mark still farther;
Had he been sav'd by any other hand,
He had been still expos'd to equal ruin.
Joch. Then let us join to bless the hand of Heaven,
That this poor outcast of the house of Israel,
Condemn'd to die by Pharaoh, kept in secret
By my advent'rous fondness; then expos'd
E'en by that very fondness which conceal'd him,
Is now, to fill the wondrous round of mercy,
Preserv'd from perishing by Pharaoh's daughter,
Sav'd by the very hand which sought to crush him.
Wise and unsearchable are all thy ways,
Thou God of Mercies—Lead me to my child.

* Thess. chap. 5. Ephes. chap. vi.

DAVID AND GOLIATH;

A SACRED DRAMA.

O bienheureux mille fois,
L'Enfant que le Seigneur aime,
Qui de bonne heure entend sa voix,
Et que ce Dieu diagne instruire lui-meme!
Loin du monde eleve ; de tous les dons des Cieur,
Il est orne des sa naissance ;
Et du mechant l'abord contagieux
N'altere point son innocence.—*Athalie.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SAUL, king of Israel.
ABNER, his general.
JESSE.
ELIAB, } sons of Jesse.
ABINADAB, }
DAVID, }
GOLIATH, the Philistian giant.
Philistines, Israelites, &c. &c.
Chorus of Hebrew women.

The scene lies in the camp in the valley of Elah, and the adjacent plain.

The subject is taken from the seventh chapter of the First Book of Samuel.

PART I.

SCENE—A shepherd's tent on a plain.

DAVID, *under a spreading tree, plays on his harp and sings.*

I.

GREAT Lord of all things! Pow'r divine!
Breathe on this erring heart of mine
Thy grace serene and pure ;
Defend my frail, my erring youth,
And teach me this important truth,
The humble are secure!

II.

Teach me to bless my lowly lot,
Confin'd to this paternal cot,
Remote from regal state!
Content to court the cooling glade,
Inhale the breeze, enjoy the shade,
And love my humble fate.

III.

No anxious vigils here I keep,
No dreams of gold distract my sleep,
Nor lead my heart astray ;
Nor blasting Envy's tainted gale
Pollutes the pleasures of the vale,
To vex my harmless day.

IV.

Yon tow'r which rears its head so high,
And bids defiance to the sky,
Invites the hostile winds :
Yon branching oak extending wide,
Provokes destruction by its pride,
And courts the fall it finds.

V.

Then let me shun th' ambitious deed,
And all the dang'rous paths which lead
To honours falsely won ;
Lord! in thy sure protection blest,
Submissive will I ever rest,
And may thy will be done!

[*He lays down his harp and rises.*

David. Methinks this shepherd's life were dull and tasteless
Without the charm of soothing song or harp :
With it, not undelightful is the haunt
Of wood, or lonely grove, or russet plain,
Made vocal by the Muse. With this lov'd harp,
This daily solace of my cares, I sooth'd
The melancholy monarch, when he lay
Smit by the chill and spirit-quenching hand
Of black despair. God of my fathers, hear me!
Here I devote my harp, my verse, myself,
To thy best service! gladly to proclaim
Glory to God on high, on earth good-will
To man ; to pour my grateful soul before thee ;
To sing thy pow'r, thy wisdom, and thy love,
And ev'ry gracious attribute ; to paint
The charms of heaven-born Virtue! So shall I
(Though with long interval of worth) aspire
To imitate the work of saints above,
Of Cherub and of Seraphim. My heart,
My talents, all I am, and all I have,
Is thine, O Father! Gracious Lord, accept
The humble dedication! Offer'd gifts
Of slaughter'd bulls and goats sacrificial
Thou hast refus'd : but lo, I come, O Lord!
To do thy will ; the living sacrifice
Of an obedient heart I lay before thee :
This humble off'ring more shall please thee, Lord,
Than horned bullocks, ceremonial rites,
New moons, and Sabbaths, passovers, and fasts :
Yet those I too will keep ; but not in lieu
Of holiness substantial, inward worth ;
As commutation cheap for pious deeds
And purity of life, but as the types
Of better things ; as fair external signs
Of inward holiness and secret truth.
But see, my father, good old Jesse comes!
To cheer the setting evening of whose life,
Content, a simple shepherd here I dwell,
Though Israel is in arms ; and royal Saul,
Encamp'd in yonder field, defies Philistia.

JESSE, DAVID.

Jesse. Blest be the gracious pow'r who gave my age
To boast a son like thee! Thou art the staff

Which props my bending years, and makes me bear
The heavy burden of declining age
With fond complacence. How unlike thy fate,
O venerable Eli! But two sons,
But only two to gild the dim remains
Of life's departing day, and bless thy age,
And both were curses to thee! Witness, Heaven,
In all the cruel catalogue of pains
Humanity turns o'er, if there be one
So terrible to human tenderness
As an unnatural child!
David. O! my lov'd father!
Long may'st thou live, in years and honours rich;
To taste and to communicate the joys,
The thousand fond endearing charities,
Of tenderness domestic; Nature's best
And loveliest gift, with which she well atones
The niggard boon of fortune.
Jesse. O! my son!
Of all the graces which adorn thy youth,
I, with a father's fondness, must commend
Thy try'd humility. For though the seer
Pour'd on thy chosen head, the sacred oil
In sign of future greatness, in sure pledge
Of highest dignity, yet here thou dwell'st
Content with toil and careless of repose;
And (harder still for an ingenuous mind)
Content to be obscure; content to watch
With careful eye, thy humble father's flock!
O earthly emblem of celestial things!
So Israel's shepherd watches o'er his fold:
The weak ones in his fost'ring bosom bears:
And gently leads in his sustaining hand,
The feeble ones with young.
David. Know'st thou, my father,
Aught from the field? for though so near the camp,
Though war's proud ensigns stream on yonder plain,
And all Philistia's swarming hosts encamp,
Oppos'd to royal Saul, beneath whose banners
My brothers lift the spear—I have not left
My fleecy charge, by thee committed to me,
To learn the various fortunes of the war.
Jesse. And wisely hast thou done. Thrice happy realm,
Who shall submit one day to his command
Who can so well obey! Obedience leads
To certain honours. Not the tow'ring wing
Of eagle-plum'd ambition mounts so surely
To fortune's highest summit, as obedience.
[*A distant sound of trumpets.*
But why that sudden ardour, O my son?
That trumpet's sound (though so remote its voice,
We hardly catch the echo as it dies)
Has rous'd the mantling crimson in thy cheek,
Kindled the martial spirit in thine eye;
And my young shepherd feels an hero's fire!
David. Thou hast not told the posture of the war,
And much my beating bosom pants to hear.
Jesse. Uncertain is the fortune of the field.
I tremble for thy brothers, thus expos'd
To constant peril; nor for them alone
Does the quick feeling agonize my heart.
I feel for all!—I mourn, that ling'ring War
Still hangs his banner o'er my native land.
Belov'd Jerusalem! O War! what art thou?
At once the proof and scourge of man's fall'n state!
After the brightest conquest, what appears
Of all thy glories? for the vanquish'd, chains!
For the proud victor, what? Alas! to reign
O'er desolated nations! a drear waste,
By one man's crime, by one man's lust of pow'r,
Unpeopled! Ravag'd fields assume the place
Of smiling harvests, and uncultur'd plains
Succeed the fertile vineyard; barren waste
Deforms the spot once rich with luscious fig;
And the fat olive.—Devastation reigns.
Here, rifled temples are the cavern'd dens
Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds obscene;
There, pop'lous cities blacken in the sun,
And in the general wreck, proud palaces
Lie undistinguish'd save by the dun smoke
Of recent conflagration. When the song
Of dear-bought joy, with many a triumph swell'd,
Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his pride,
How is the grateful harmony profan'd
With the sad dissonance of virgin's cries,
Who mourn their brothers slain! of matrons hoar,
Who clasp their wither'd hands, and fondly ask,
With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd sons!
How is the laurel's verdure stain'd with blood,
And soil'd with widows' tears!
David. Thrice mournful truth!
Yet when our country's sacred rights are menac'd;
Her firm foundations shaken to their base;
When all we love, and all that we revere,
Our hearths and altars, children, parents, wives,
Our liberties and laws; the throne they guard,
Are scorn'd and trampl'd on—then, then, my father!
'Tis then Religion's voice; then God himself
Commands us to defend his injur'd name,
And think the victory cheaply bought with life.
'Twere then inglorious weakness, mean self-love:
To lie inactive, when the stirring voice
Of the shrill trumpet wakes the patriot youth,
And, with heroic valour, bids them dare
The foul idolatrous bands, e'en to the death.
Jesse. God and thy country claim the life they gave;
No other cause can sanctify resentment.
David. Sure virtuous friendship is a noble cause!
O were the princely Jonathan in danger,
How would I die, well pleas'd, in his defence;
When, 'twas long since, then but a stripling boy
I made short sojourn in his father's palace,
(At first to soothe his troubled mind with song
His armour-bearer next) I well remember
The gracious bounties of the gallant prince.
How would he sit, attentive to my strain,
While to my harp I sung the harmless joys
Which crown a shepherd's life! How would he cry,
Bless'd youth! far happier in thy native worth,
Far richer in the talent Heav'n has lent thee,
Than if a crown hung o'er thy anxious brow.
The jealous monarch mark'd our growing friendship;
And as my favour grew with those about him,

His royal bounty lessen'd, till at length,
For Bethl'hem's safer shades I left the court.
Nor would these alter'd features now be known,
Grown into manly strength; nor this chang'd form,
Enlarg'd with age, and clad in russet weed.
Jesse. I have employment for thee, my lov'd son!
Will please thy active spirit. Go, my boy!
Haste to the field of war, to yonder camp,
Where in the vale of Elah mighty Saul
Commands the hosts of Israel. Greet thy brothers;
Observe their deeds, note their demeanour well,
And mark if on their actions Wisdom waits.
Bear to them too (for well the waste of war
Will make it needful) such plain healthful viands
As furnish out our frugal shepherd's meal.
And to the valiant captain of their host
Present such rural gifts as suit our fortune:
Heap'd on the board within my tent thou'lt find them.
David. With joy I 'll bear thy presents to my brothers;
And to the valiant captain of their host
The rural gifts thy gratitude assigns him.
Delightful task!—for I shall view the camp!
What transport to behold the tented field,
The pointed spear, the blaze of shields and arms,
And all the proud accoutrements of war!
But, oh! far dearer transport would it yield me,
Could this right arm alone avenge the cause
Of injur'd Israel! could my single death
Preserve the guiltless thousands doom'd to bleed!
Jesse. Let not thy youth be dazzled, O my son!
With deeds of bold emprize, as valour only
Were virtue, and the gentle arts of peace,
Of truth, and justice, were not worth thy care.
When thou shalt view the splendours of the war,
The gay caparison, the burnish'd shield,
The plume-crown'd helmet, and the glitt'ring spear,
Scorn not the humble virtues of the shade,
Nor think that Heav'n views only with applause
The active merit and the busy toil
Of heroes, statesmen, and the bustling sons
Of public care. These have their just reward,
In wealth, in honours, and the well-earned fame
Their high achievements bring. 'Tis in this view
That virtue is her proper recompence:
Wealth, as its natural consequence, will flow
From industry: toil with success is crown'd:
From splendid actions high renown will spring.
Such is the usual course of human things;
For Wisdom Infinite permits, that thus
Effects to causes be proportionate,
And nat'ral ends by nat'ral means achiev'd.
But in the future estimate which Heaven
Will make of things terrestrial, know, my son,
That no inferior blessing is reserv'd
For the mild passive virtues: meek content,
Heroic self-denial, nobler far
Than all th' achievements noisy Fame reports,
When her shrill trump proclaims the proud success
Which desolates the nations. But, on earth,
These are not always prosperous—mark the cause:
Eternal Justice keeps them for the bliss
Of final recompence, for the dread day
Of gen'ral retribution. O, my son!
The ostentatious virtues which still press
For notice and for praise; the brilliant deeds
Which live but in the eye of observation,
These have their meed at once. But there's joy
To the fond votaries of Fame unknown,
To hear the still small voice of Conscience speak
Its whispering plaudit to the silent soul.
Heaven notes the sigh afflicted Goodness heaves
Hears the low plaint by human ear unheard,
And from the cheek of patient Sorrow wipes
The tear, by mortal eye unseen or scorn'd.
David. As Hermon's dews their grateful freshness shed,
And cheer the herbage, and the flow'rs renew,
So do thy words a quickening balm infuse,
And grateful sink in my delighted soul.
Jesse. Go then, my child! and may the gracious God
Who bless'd our fathers, bless my much lov'd son!
David. Farewell, my father!—and of this be sure,
That not one precept from thy honour'd lips
Shall fall by me unnotic'd; not one grace,
One venerable virtue which adorns
Thy daily life, but I, with watchful care
And due observance, will in mine transplant it.
[*Exit* David.
Jesse. He 's gone! and still my aching eyes pursue
And strain their orbs still longer to behold him.
Oh! who can tell when next I may embrace him?
Who can declare the counsels of the Lord?
Or when the moment preordain'd by Heav'n
To fill his great designs, may come? This son
This blessing of my age, is set apart
For high exploits; the chosen instrument
Of all-disposing Heav'n for mighty deeds.
Still I recall the day, and to my mind
The scene is ever present, when the seer,
Illustrious Samuel, to the humble shades
Of Bethlehem came, pretending sacrifice,
To screen his errand from the jealous king
He sanctify'd us first, me and my sons;
For sanctity increas'd should still precede
Increase of dignity. When he declar'd
He came commission'd from on high to find,
Among the sons of Jesse, Israel's king,
Astonishment entranc'd my wond'ring soul!
Yet was it not a wild, tumultuous bliss;
Such rash delight as promis'd honours yield
To light vain minds: no, 'twas a doubtful joy,
Chastis'd by tim'rous Virtue, lest a gift
So splendid and so dang'rous might destroy
Him it was meant to raise. My eldest born,
Eliab, tall of stature, I presented;
But God, who judges not by outward form,
But tries the heart, forbade the holy prophet
To choose my eldest born. For Saul, he said,
Gave proof, that fair proportion, and the grace
Of limb and feature, ill repaid the want
Of virtue. All my other sons alike
By Samuel were rejected; till, at last,
On my young boy, on David's chosen head,
The prophet pour'd the consecrated oil.

Yet ne'er did pride elate him, ne'er did scorn
For his rejected elders swell his heart.
Not in such gentle charity to him
His haughtier brothers live: but all he pardons.
To meditation, and to humble toil,
To pray'r, and praise devoted, here he dwells.
O may the Graces which adorn retreat
One day delight a court! record his name
With saints and prophets, dignify his race,
And may the sacred songs his leisure frames
Instruct mankind, and sanctify a world!

PART II.

Scene—The Camp.

ELIAB, ABINADAB, ABNER, ISRAELITES.

Eliab. Still is the event of this long war uncertain:
Still do the adverse hosts, on either side,
Protract, with ling'ring caution, an encounter,
Which must to one be fatal.
Abinidab. This descent,
Thus to the very confines of our land,
Proclaims the sanguine hope that fires the foe.
In Ephes-dammim boldly they encamp;
Th' uncircumcis'd Philistines pitch their tents
On Judah's hallow'd earth.
Eliab. Full forty days
Has the insulting giant, proud Goliath,
The champion of Philistia, fiercely challeng'd
Some Israelitish foe. But who so vain
To dare such force unequal? who so bent
On sure destruction, to accept his terms,
And rush on death, beneath the giant force
Of his enormous bulk?
Abinadab. 'Tis near the time
When in the adjacent valley which divides
Th' opposing armies he is wont to make
His daily challenge.
Eliab. Much I marvel, brother,
No greetings from our father reach our ears.
With ease and plenty bless'd, he little recks
The daily hardships which his sons endure.
But see! behold his darling boy approaches!
Abin. How, David here! whence this unlook'd-for guest?
Eliab. A spy upon our actions; sent, no doubt,
To scan our deeds, with beardless gravity
Affecting wisdom; to observe each word,
To magnify the venial faults of youth,
And construe harmless mirth to foul offence.

Enter DAVID.

David. All hail, my dearest brothers!
Eliab. Means thy greeting
True love, or arrogant scorn?
David. O, most true love!
Sweet as the precious ointment which bedew'd
The sacred head of Aaron, and descended
Upon his hallow'd vest, so sweet, my brothers,
Is fond fraternal amity; such love
As my touch'd bosom feels at your approach.
Eliab. Still that fine glozing speech, those holy saws,
And all that trick of studied sanctity,
Of smooth-turn'd periods and trim eloquence,
Which charms thy doating father! But confess,
What dost thou here? Is it to sooth thy pride,
And gratify thy vain desire to roam
In quest of pleasures unallow'd? or com'st thou,
A willing spy, to note thy brothers' deeds?
Where hast thou left those few poor straggling sheep?
More suited to thy ignorance and years
The care of those, than here to wander idly:
Why cam'st thou hither?
David. Is there not a cause?
Why that displeasure kindling in thine eye,
My angry brother? why those taunts unkind?
Not idly bent on sport; not to delight
Mine eye with all this gay parade of war;
To gratify a roving appetite,
Or fondly to indulge a curious ear
With any tale of rumour, am I come;
But to approve myself a loving brother.
I bring the blessing of your aged sire,
With gifts of such plain cates and rural viands
As suit his frugal fortune. Tell me now,
Where the bold captain of your host encamps?
Eliab. Wherefore inquire? what boots it thee to know?
Behold him there: great Abner, fam'd in arms.
David. I bring thee, mighty Abner from my father,
(A simple shepherd swain in yonder vale)
Such humble gifts as shepherd swains bestow.
Abner. Thanks, gentle youth! with pleasure I receive
The grateful off'ring. Why does thy quick eye
Thus wander with unsatisfi'd delight?
David. New as I am to all the trade of war
Each sound has novelty; each thing I see
Attracts attention; every noise I hear
Awakes confus'd emotions; indistinct,
Yet full of charming tumult, sweet distraction.
'Tis all delightful hurry! Oh! the joy
Of young ideas painted on the mind,
In the warm glowing colours fancy spread
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely! Ah! what warlike sound
Salutes my ravish'd ear?

[*Sound of trumpets.*

Abner. 'Tis the Philistine
Proclaiming, by his herald, through the ranks,
His near approach. Each morning he repeats
His challenge to our bands.
David. Ha! what Philistine?
Who is he?
Eliab. Wherefore ask? for thy raw youth
And rustic ignorance, 'twere fitter learn
Some rural art! some secret to prevent
Contagion in thy flocks; some better means
To save their fleece immaculate. These mean arts
Of soft inglorious peace far better suit
Thy low obscurity, than thus to seek
High things pertaining to exploits of arms.
David. Urg'd as I am I will not answer thee
Who conquers his own spirit, O my brother!
He is the only conqueror.—Again
That shout mysterious! Pray you (*to Abner*) tell me who
This proud Philistine is, who sends defiance
To Israel's hardy chieftians?
Abner. Stranger youth
So lovely and so mild is thy demeanor,
So gentle and so patient; such the air

Of candour and of courage which adorns
Thy blooming features, thou hast won my love:
And I will tell thee.
David. Mighty Abner, thanks!
Abner. Thrice, and no more, he sounds, his daily rule!
This man of war, this champion of Philistia,
Is of the sons of Anak's giant-race:
Goliath is his name. His fearful stature,
Unparalell'd in Israel, measures more
Than twice three cubits. On his tow'ring head
A helm of burnish'd brass the giant wears,
So pond'rous, it would crush the stoutest man
In all our hosts. A coat of mailed armour
Guards his capacious trunk! compar'd with which,
The amplest oak that spreads his rugged arms
In Bashan's groves, were small. About his neck
A shining corslet hangs. On his vast thigh
The plaited cuiras, firmly jointed, stands.
But who shall tell the wonders of his spear,
And hope to gain belief! Of massive iron
Its temper'd frame, not less than the broad beam
To which the busy weaver hangs his loom:
Not to be wielded by a mortal hand,
Save by his own. An armour bearer walks
Before this mighty, champion, in his hand
Bearing the giant's shield. Thrice ev'ry morn
His herald sounds the trumpet of defiance!
Off'ring at once to end the long-drawn war
In single combat 'gainst that hardy foe
Who dares encounter him.
David. Say, mighty Abner,
What are the haughty terms of his defiance?
Abner. Proudly he stalks around th' extremest bounds
Of Elah's vale. His herald sounds the note
Of offer'd battle. Then the furious giant,
With such a voice as from the troubled sky
In vollied thunder breaks, thus sends his challenge:
'Why do you set your battle in array,
Ye men of Israel? Wherefore waste the lives
Of needless thousands? Why protract a war
Which may at once be ended? Are not you
Servants to Saul your king? and am not I
With triumph let me speak it, a Philistine?
Choose out a man from all your armed hosts,
Of courage most approv'd, and I will meet him;
His single arm to mine. Th' event of this
Shall fix the fate of Israel and Philistia.
If victory favour him, then will we live
Your tributary slaves; but if my arm
Be crown'd with conquest, you shall then live ours.
Give me a man, if your effeminate bands
A man can boast. Your armies I defy!'
David. What shall be done to him who shall subdue
This vile idolater?
Abner. He shall receive
Such ample bounties, such profuse rewards,
As might inflame the old, or warm the coward,
Were not the odds so desperate.
David. Say, what are they?
Abner. The royal Saul has promis'd that bold hero
Who should encounter and subdue Goliath,
All dignity and favour; that his house
Shall be set free from tribute, and ennobled
With the first honours Israel has to give.
As for the gallant conqueror himself,
No less a recompence than the fair princess,
Our monarch's peerless daughter.
David. Beauteous Michael!
It is indeed a boon which kings might strive for.
And has none answer'd yet this bold defiance?
What! all this goodly host of Israelites!
God's own peculiar people! all afraid,
T' assert God's injur'd honour and their own?
Where is the king, who in his early youth
Wrought deeds of fame! Where princely Jonathan?
Not so the gallant youth Philistia fear'd
At Bozez and at Seneh;* when the earth
Shook from her deep foundations to behold
The wond'rous carnage of his single hand
On the uncircumcis'd. When he exclaim'd,
With glorious confidence—'Shall numbers awe me?
God will protect his own: with him to save
It boots not, friends, by many or by few.'
This was an hero! Why does he delay
To meet this boaster? For thy courtesy,
Thrice noble Abner, I am bound to thank thee;
Wouldst thou complete thy gen'rous offices?
I dare not ask it.
Abner. Speak thy wishes freely:
My soul inclines to serve thee.
David. Then, O Abner,
Conduct me to the king! There is a cause
Will justify this boldness!
Eliab. Braggard, hold!
Abner. I take thee at thy word; and will, with speed,
Conduct thee to my royal master's presence.
In yonder tent the anxious monarch waits
Th' event of this day's challenge.
David. Noble Abner,
Accept my thanks. Now to thy private ear,
If so thy grace permit I will unfold
My secret soul, and ease my lab'ring breast,
Which pants with high designs, and beats for glory.

PART III.

Scene.—Saul's tent.

Saul. Why was I made a king? what I have gain'd
In envy'd greatness and uneasy pow'r,
I've lost in peace of mind, in virtue lost!
Why did deceitful transports fire my soul
When Samuel plac'd upon my youthful brow
The crown of Israel? I had known content,
Nay happiness, if happiness unmix'd
To mortal man were known, had I still liv'd
Among the humble tents of Benjamin.
A shepherd's occupation was my joy,
And every guiltless day was crown'd with peace,
But now, a sullen cloud forever hangs
O'er the faint sunshine of my brightest hours,
Dark'ning the golden promise of the morn.
I ne'er shall taste the dear domestic joys

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

My meanest subjects know. True, I have sons,
Whose virtues would have charm'd a private man,
And drawn down blessings on their humble sire.
I love their virtues too; but 'tis a love
Which jealousy has poison'd. Jonathan
Is all a father's fondness could conceive
Of amiable and good—Of that no more!
He is too popular; the people doat
Upon th' ingenuous graces of his youth.
Curs'd popularity! which makes a father
Detest the merit of a son he loves,
How did their fond idolatry, perforce,
Rescue his sentenc'd life, when doom'd by lot
To perish at Beth-aven,* for the breach
Of strict injunction, that of all my bands,
Not one that day should taste of food and live!
My subjects clamour at this tedious war,
Yet of my num'rous arm'd chiefs not one
Has courage to engage this man of Gath.
O for a champion bold enough to face
This giant-boaster, whose repeated threats
Strike through my inmost soul! There was a time—
Of that no more! I am not what I was.
Should valiant Jonathan accept the challenge,
'Twould but increase his influence, raise his fame,
And make the crown sit lightly on my brow.
Ill could my wounded spirit brook the voice
Of harsh comparison 'twixt sire and son.

SAUL, ABNER.

Abner. What meditation holds thee thus engag'd,
O king! and keeps thine active spirit bound;
When busy war for other cares demands
Than ruminating thought and pale despair?
Saul. Abner draw near. My weary soul sinks down
Beneath the heavy pressure of misfortune.
O for that spirit which inflam'd my breast
With sudden fervour, when, among the seers
And holy sages my prophetic voice
Was heard attentive, and th' astonish'd throng,
Wond'ring, exclaim'd,—'Is Saul among the prophets?'
Where's that bold arm which quell'd the Amalekite,
And nobly spar'd fierce Agag and his flocks?
'Tis past! the light of Israel now is quench'd:
Shorn of his beams, my sun of glory sets!
Rise Moab, Edom, angry Ammon rise!
Come Gaza, Ashdod come! let Ekron boast,
And Askelon rejoice, for Saul is—nothing.
Abner. I bring thee news, O king!
Saul. My valiant uncle!
What can avail thy news? A soul oppress'd
Refuses still to hear the charmer's voice,
Howe'er enticingly he charm. What news
Can soothe my sickly soul, while Gath's fell giant
Repeats each morning to my frighten'd hosts
His daring challenge, none accepting it?
Abner. It is accepted.
Saul. Ha! By whom? how? when?
What prince, what gen'ral, what illustrious hero,

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

What vet'ran chief, what warrior of renown,
Will dare to meet the haughty foes defiance?
Speak, my brave gen'ral! noble Abner speak!
Abner. No prince, no warrior, no illustrious chief,
No vet'ran hero dares accept the challenge;
But what will move thy wonder, mighty king,
One train'd to peaceful deeds, and new to arms,
A simple shepherd swain!
Saul. O mockery!
No more of this light tale, it suits but ill
Thy bearded gravity: or rather tell it
To credulous age, or weak believing women;
They love whate'er is marvellous, and doat
On deeds prodigious and incredible,
Which sober sense rejects. I laugh to think
Of thy extravagance. A shepherd's boy
Encounter him whom nations dread to meet!
Abner. Is valour then peculiar to high birth?
If Heav'n had so decreed, know, scornful king,
That Saul the Benjamite had never reign'd.
No!—Glory darts her soul-pervading ray
On thrones and cottages, regardless still
Of all the artificial, nice distinctions
Vain human customs make.
Saul Where is this youth?
Abner. Without thy tent he waits. Such humble sweetness,
Fir'd with the secret conscience of desert;
Such manly bearing, temper'd with such soft ness,
And so adorn'd with ev'ry outward charm
Of graceful form and feature, saw I never.
Saul. Bring me the youth.
Abner. He waits thy royal pleasure.
[*Exit Abner*
Saul. What must I think? Abner himself is brave,
And skill'd in human kind: nor does he judge
So lightly, to be caught by specious words
And Fraud's smooth artifice, were there not marks
Of worth intrinsic. But behold he comes!
The youth too with him! Justly did he praise
The candour which adorns his open brow.

Re-enter Abner and David.

David. Hail mighty king!
Abner. Behold thy proffer'd champion!
Saul. Art thou the youth whose high heroic zeal
Aspires to meet the giant son of Anak?
David. If so the king permit.
Saul. Impossible!
Why, what experience has thy youth of arms?
Where, stripling, didst *thou* learn the trade of war?
Beneath what hoary vet'ran hast *thou* serv'd?
What feats hast *thou* achiev'd, what daring deeds?
What well-rang'd phalanx, say, what charging hosts,
What hard campaigns, what sieges hast thou seen?
Hast thou e'er scal'd the city's rampir'd wall
Or hurl'd the missile dart, or learn'd to poise
The warrior's deathful spear? The use of targe,
Of helm, and buckler, is to thee unknown.
David. Arms I have seldom seen. I little know

Of war's proud discipline. The trumpet's clang,
The shock of charging hosts, the rampir'd wall,
Th' embattled phalanx, and the warrior's spear,
The use of targe and helm to me is new.
My zeal for God, my patriot love of Israel,
My reverence for my king, behold my claims!
Saul. But gentle youth! thou hast no fame in arms,
Renown, with her shrill clarion, never bore
Thy honour'd name to many a land remote;
From the fair regions where Euphrates laves
Assyria's borders to the distant Nile.
David. True, mighty king! I am indeed alike
Unbless'd by Fortune and to Fame unknown;
A lowly shepherd-swain of Judah's tribe:
But greatness ever springs from low beginnings.
That very Nile thou mention'st, whose broad stream
Bears fruitfulness and health through many a clime,
From an unknown, penurious, scanty source
Took its first rise. The forest oak, which shades
The sultry troops in many a toilsome march
Once an unheeded acorn lay. O king!
Who ne'er begins can never aught achieve
Of glorious. Thou thyself wast once unknown,
Till fair occasion brought thy worth to light.
Far higher views inspire my youthful heart
Than human praise: I seek to vindicate
Th' insulted honour of the God I serve.
Abner. 'Tis nobly said.
Saul. I love thy spirit, youth!
But dare not trust thy inexperienc'd arm
Against a giant's might. The sight of blood,
Though brave thou feel'st when peril is not nigh,
Will pale thy ardent cheek.
David. Not so, O king!
This youthful arm has been imbru'd in blood
Though yet no blood of man has ever stain'd it.
Thy servant's occupation is a shepherd.
With jealous care I watch'd my father's flock:
A brindled lion and a furious bear
Forth from the thicket rush'd upon the fold,
Seiz'd a young lamb, and tore their bleating spoil.
Urg'd by compassion for my helpless charge,
I felt a new-born vigour nerve my arm;
And, eager, on the foaming monsters rush'd.
The famish'd lion by his grisly beard,
Enrag'd, I caught, and smote him to the ground.
The panting monster struggling in my gripe,
Shook terribly his bristling mane, and lash'd
His own gaunt, gory sides; fiercely he ground
His gnashing teeth, and rolled his starting eyes,
Bloodshot with agony; then with a groan,
That wak'd the echoes of the mountain, died.
Nor did his grim associate 'scape my arm;
Thy servant slew the lion and the bear;
I kill'd them both, and bore their shaggy spoils
In triumph home: and shall I fear to meet
Th' uncircumcis'd Philistine? No: that God
Who sav'd me from the bear's destructive fang
And hungry lion's jaw, will not he save me
From this idolater?
Saul. He will, he will!
Go, noble youth! be valiant and be bless'd!
The God thou serv'st will shield thee in the fight,
And nerve thy arm with more than mortal strength.
Abner. So the bold Nazarite* a lion slew:
An earnest of his victories o'er Philistia!
Saul. Go, Abner; see the youth be well equipp'd
With shield and spear. Be it thy care to grace him
With all the fit accoutrements of war.
The choicest mail from my rich armory take,
And gird upon his thigh my own try'd sword
Of noblest temper'd steel.
Abner. I shall obey.
David. Pardon, O king! the coat of plaited mail
These limbs have never known; it would not shield,
'Twould but encumber one who never felt
The weight of armour.
Saul. Take thy wish, my son!
Thy sword then, and the God of Jacob guard thee!

PART IV.

Scene—Another part of the camp.

DAVID (*kneeling.*)

ETERNAL Justice! in whose awful scale
Th' event of battle hangs! Eternal Truth!
Whose beams illumines all! Eternal Mercy!
If, by thy attributes I may, unblam'd,
Address thee; Lord of glory! hear me now:
O teach these hands to war, these arms to fight!
Thou ever present help in time of need!
Let thy broad mercy, as a shield, defend,
And let thine everlasting arms support me!
Strong in thy strength, in thy protection safe
Then, though the heathen rage, I shall not fear.
Jehovah, be my buckler! Mighty Lord!
Thou who hast deign'd by humble instruments
To manifest the wonders of thy might,
Be present with me now! 'Tis thine own cause!
Thy wisdom sees events, thy goodness plans
Schemes baffling our conception—and, 'tis still
Omnipotence which executes the deed
Of high design, though by a feeble arm!
I feel a secret impulse drive me on;
And my soul springs impatient for the fight!
'Tis not the heated spirits, or warm blood
Of sanguine youth with which my bosom burns
And, though I thirst to meet th' insulting foe,
And pant for glory, 'tis not, witness Heav'n!
'Tis not the sinful lust of fading fame,
The perishable praise of mortal man;
His praise I covet, whose applause is Life.

DAVID, ELIAB, ISRAELITES.

Eliab. What do I hear? thou truant! thou hast dar'd
E'en to the awful presence of the king
Bear thy presumption!
David. He who fears the Lord
Shall boldly stand before the face of kings,
And shall not be asham'd.
Eliab. But what wild dream
Has urg'd thee to this deed of desp'rate rashness?
Thou mean'st, so I have learn'd, to meet Goliath,
His single arm to thine.

* Samson. See Judges, chap. xiv.

David. 'Tis what I purpose,
Ev'n on this spot. Each moment I expect
His wish'd approach.
Eliab. Go home; return, for shame!
Nor madly draw destruction on thy head.
Thy doating father, when thy shepherd's coat,
Drench'd in thy blood, is brought him, will lament,
And rend his furrow'd cheek and silver hair,
As if some mighty loss had touch'd his age;
And mourn, ev'n as the partial patriarch mourn'd
When Joseph's bloody garment he receiv'd
From his less dear, nor less deserving, sons:
But whence that glitt'ring ornament which hangs
Useless upon thy thigh?
David. 'Tis the king's gift.
But thou art right; it suits not me, my brother!
Nor sword I mean to use, nor spear to poise,
Lest men should say I put my trust in arms,
Not in the Lord of Hosts.
Eliab. Then thou indeed
Art bent to seek thy death?
David. And what is death?
Is it so terrible to die, my brother?
Or grant it terrible, is it for that
The less inevitable? If, indeed
We could by stratagem elude the blow,
When some high duty calls us forth to die,
And thus for ever shun it, and escape
The universal lot,—then fond self-love,
Then cautious Prudence, boldly might produce
Their fine-spun arguments, their learn'd harangues,
Their cobweb arts, their phrase sophistical,
Their subtle doubts, and all the specious trick
Of selfish cunning lab'ring for its end.
But since, howe'er protracted, death will come,
Why fondly study, with ingenious pains,
To put it off! To breathe a little longer
Is to defer our fate, but not to shun it.
Small gain! which Wisdom with indiff'rent eye
Beholds. Why wish to drink the bitter dregs
Of life's exhausted chalice, whose last runnings,
Ev'n at the best, are vapid! Why not die
(If Heav'n so will) in manhood's op'ning bloom,
When all the flush of life is gay about us!
When sprightly youth with many a new-born joy,
Solicits every sense! So may we then
Present a sacrifice, unmeet indeed,
(Ah, how unmeet!) but less unworthy far,
Than the world's leavings; than a worn out heart,
By vice enfeebled, and by vain desires
Sunk and exhausted!
Eliab. Hark! I hear a sound
Of multitudes approaching!
David. 'Tis the giant!
I see him not, but hear his measur'd pace.
Eliab. Look, where his pond'rous shield is borne before him!
David. Like a broad moon its ample disk portends.
But soft!—what unknown prodigy appears?
A moving mountain cas'd in polish'd brass!
Eliab (*getting behind David*) How's this?
Thou dost not tremble. Thy firm joints
Betray no fear; thy accents are not broken;
Thy cheek retains its red; thine eye its lustre,
He comes more near! Dost thou not fear him now?
David. No,
The vast colossal statue nor inspires
Respect nor fear. Mere magnitude of form,
Without proportion'd intellect and valour,
Strikes not my soul with rev'rence or with awe.
Eliab. Near, and more near he comes! I hold it rash
To stay so near him, and expose a life
Which may, hereafter serve the state.
Farewell. [*Exit.*

[Goliath *advances, clad in complete armour. One bearing his shield precedes him. The opposing armies are seen at a distance, drawn up on each side of the valley.* Goliath *begins to speak before he comes on.* David *stands in the same place, with an air of indifference.*]

Goliath. Where is this mighty man of war, who dares
Accept the challenge of Philistia's chief?
What victor king, what gen'ral drench'd in blood,
Claims this high privilege? What are his rights?
What proud credentials does the boaster bring
To prove his claim? What cities laid in ashes?
What ruin'd provinces? What slaughter'd realms?
What heads of heroes, and what hearts of kings,
In battle kill'd, or at his altars slain,
Has he to boast? Is his bright armory
Thick set with spears, and swords, and coats of mail
Of vanquish'd nations, by his single arm
Subdu'd? Where is the mortal man so bold,
So much a wretch, so out of love with life,
To dare the weight of this uplifted spear,
Which never fell innoxious? Yet I swear,
I grudge the glory to this parting soul
To fall by this right hand. 'Twill sweeten death,
To know he had the honour to contend
With the dread son of Anak. Latest time
From blank oblivion shall retrieve his name
Who dar'd to perish in unequal fight
With Gath's triumphant champion. Come, advance.
Philistia's gods to Israel's. Sound, my herald—
Sound for the battle straight.
[*Herald sounds the trumpet.*
David. Behold thy foe!
Goliath. I see him not.
David. Behold him here!
Goliath. Say, where!
Direct my sight. I do not war with boys.
David. I stand prepar'd: thy single arm to mine.
Goliath. Why this is mockery, minion! it may chance
To cost thee dear. Sport not with things above thee!
But tell me who of all this num'rous host
Expects his death from me? Which is the man
Whom Israel sends to meet my bold defiance?
David. Th' election of my sov'reign falls on me.

Goliath. On thee! on thee! By Dagon, 'tis too much!
Thou curled minion! thou a nation's champion!
'Twould move my mirth at any other time;
But trifling 's out of tune, begone, light boy!
And tempt me not too far.
David. I do defy thee,
Thou foul idolator! Hast thou not scorn'd
The armies of the living God I serve?
By me he will avenge upon thy head
Thy nation's sins and thine. Arm'd with his name,
Unshrinking, I dare meet the stoutest foe
That ever bath'd his hostile spear in blood.
Goliath. (*ironically*) Indeed! 'tis wond'rous well,
Now, by my gods,
The stripling plays the orator! Vain boy!
Keep close to that same bloodless war of words,
And thou shalt still be safe. Tongue-valiant warrior!
Where is thy sylvan crook, with garlands hung,
Of idle field flowers? where thy wanton harp,
Thou dainty finger'd hero? better strike
Its notes lascivious, or the lulling lute
Touch softly, than provoke the trumpet's rage.
I will not stain the honour of my spear
With thy inglorious blood. Shall that fair cheek
Be scar'd with wounds unseemly? Rather go
And hold fond dalliance with the Syrian maids;
To wanton measures dance, and let them braid
The bright luxuriance of thy golden hair;
They, for their lost Adonis, may mistake
Thy dainty form.
David. Peace, thou unhallow'd railer!
O tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound
Reach Askelon, how once your slaughter'd lords
By mighty Samson* found one common grave:
When his broad shoulder the firm-pillars heav'd,
And to its base the tott'ring fabric shook.
Goliath. Insulting boy! perhaps thou hast not heard
The infamy of that glorious day,
When your weak host at Eben-ezer† pitch'd
Their quick-abandon'd tent? Then when your ark,
Your talisman, your charm, your boasted pledge
Of safety and success, was tamely lost!
And yet not tamely, since by me 'twas won.
When with this good right arm I thinn'd your ranks,
And bravely crush'd, beneath a single blow
The chosen guardians of this vaunted shrine,
Hophni‡ and Phineas. The fam'd ark itself
I bore to Ashdod.
David. I remember too,
Since thou provok'st th' unwelcome truth, how all
Your blushing priests beheld their idol's shame;
When prostrate Dagon fell before the ark,
And your frail god was shiver'd. Then Philistia,
Idolatrous Philistia, flew for succour
To Israel's help, and all her smitten nobles
Confess'd the Lord was God; and the bless'd ark.
Gladly, with reverential awe restor'd.
Goliath. By Ashod's fane thou ly'st.

* Judges, c. xvi. † Samuel. c. v.
‡ Commentators say, that Chaldee paraphrase makes Goliath boast that he had killed Hophni and Phineas, and taken the ark prisoner.

Now will I meet thee,
Thou insect warrior, since thou dar'st me thus!
Already I behold thy mangled limbs,
Dissever'd each from each, ere long to feed
The fierce blood-snuffing vulture. Mark me well.
Around my spear I'll twist thy shining locks,
And toss in air thy head all gash'd with wounds,
Thy lip yet quiv'ring with the dire convulsion
Of recent death!—Art thou not terrify'd?
David. No:
True courage is not mov'd by breath of words:
While rash bravery of boiling blood,
Impetuous, knows no settled principle.
A fev'rish tide, it has its ebbs and flows,
As spirits raise or fall, as wine inflames,
Or circumstances change: but inborn Courage,
The gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith,
Holds its firm empire in the constant soul;
And like the steadfast pole-star, never once
From the same fix'd and faithful point declines.
Goliath. The curses of Philistia's gods be on thee!
This fine-drawn speech is meant to lengthen out
That little life thy words pretend to scorn.
David. Ha! say'st thou so? Come on then. Mark us well.
Thou com'st to me with sword, and spear, and shield;
In the dread name of Israel's God I come;
The living Lord of Hosts, whom thou defy'st!
Yet though no shield I bring, no arms except
These five smooth stones I gather'd from the brook,
With such a simple sling as shepherd's use -
Yet all expos'd defenceless as I am,
The God I serve shall give thee up a prey
To my victorious arm. This day I mean
To make the uncircumcis'd tribes confess
There is a God in Israel. I will give thee,
Spite of thy vaunted strength and giant bulk,
To glut the carrion kites. Nor thee alone;
The mangled carcases of your thick hosts
Shall spread the plains of Elah, till Philistia,
Through all her trembling tents and flying bands,
Shall own that Judah's God is God indeed!
—I dare thee to the trial.
Goliath. Follow me—
In this good spear I trust.
David. I trust in Heav'n!
The God of battle stimulates my arm,
And fires my soul with ardour not its own.

PART V

Scene—The tent of Saul.

Saul (*rising from his couch.*) Oh! that I knew the black and midnight arts
Of wizard sorcery! that I could call
The slumb'ring spirit from the shades of hell!
Or, like the Chaldean sages, could foreknow
Th' event of things unacted! I might then
Anticipate my fortune. How I 'm fall'n!
The sport of vain chimeras, the weak slave
Of fear and fancy; coveting to know
The arts obscene, which foul diviners use.
Thick blood and moping Melancholy lead

To baleful Superstition—that fell fiend,
Whose with'ring charms blast the fair bloom of Virtue.
Why did my wounded pride with scorn reject
The wholesome truths which holy Samuel told me?
Why drive him from my presence? he might now
Raise my sunk soul, and my benighted mind
Enlighten'd with religion's cheering ray.
He dar'd to menace me with loss of empire;
And I, for that bold honesty, dismiss'd him.
'Another shall possess thy throne,' he cry'd:
'A stranger!' This unwelcome prophecy
Has lined my crown and strew'd my couch with thorns.
Each ray of op'ning merit I discern
In friend or foe, distracts my troubled soul,
Lest he should prove my rival. But this morn,
Ev'n my young champion lovely as he look'd
In blooming valour, struck me to the soul
With Jealousy's barb'd dart. O Jealousy!
Thou ugliest fiend of hell! thy deadly venom
Preys on my vitals, turns the healthful hue
Of my fresh cheek to haggard sallowness,
And drinks my spirit up.
[*A flourish of trumpets, shouting, &c.*
What sounds are those?
The combat is decided. Hark! again
Those shouts proclaim it! Now, O God of Jacob,
If yet thou hast not quite withdrawn from Saul
Thy light and favour, prosper me this once!
But Abner comes! I dread to hear his tale!
Fair hope, with smiling face but ling'ring foot,
Has long deceiv'd me.

Abner. King of Israel, hail!
Now thou art king indeed. The youth has conquer'd:
Goliath's dead.

Saul. Oh speak thy tale again,
Lest my fond ears deceive me!

Abner. Thy young champion
Has slain the giant.

Saul. Then God is gracious still,
In spite of my offences! But good Abner!
How was it? Tell me all. Where is my champion?
Quick let me press him to my grateful heart,
And pay him a king's thanks. And yet, who knows,
This forward friend may prove an active foe!
No more of that. Tell me the whole, brave Abner!
And paint the glorious acts of my young hero!

Abner. Full in the centre of the camp he stood!
Th' opposing armies rang'd on either side
In proud array. The haughty giant stalk'd
Stately across the valley. Next the youth
With modest confidence advanc'd. Nor pomp,
Nor gay parade, nor martial ornament,
His graceful form adorn'd. Goliath strait,
With solemn state began the busy work
Of dreadful preparation. In one place
His closely jointed mail an op'ning left
For air, and only one: the watchful youth
Mark'd that the beaver of his helm was up.
Meanwhile the giant such a blow devis'd
As would have crush'd him. This the youth perceiv'd,
And from his well-directed sling quick hurl'd,
With dex'trous aim a stone, which sunk, deep lodg'd,
In the capacious forehead of the foe.
Then with a cry, as loud and terrible
As Lybian lions roaring for their young,
Quite stunn'd, the furious giant stagger'd, reel'd,
And fell: the mighty mass of man fell prone.
With its own weight his shatter'd bulk was bruis'd.
His clattering arms rung dreadfully through the field,
And the firm basis of the solid earth
Shook. Chok'd with blood and dust, he curs'd his gods,
And died blaspheming! Straight the victor youth
Drew from his sheath the giant's pond'rous sword,
And from the enormous trunk the gory head,
Furious in death, he sever'd. The grim visage
Look'd threat'ning still, and still frown'd horribly.

Saul. O glorious deed! O valiant conqueror!

Abner. The youth so calm appear'd, so nobly firm,
So cool, yet so intrepid, that these eyes
Ne'er saw such temp'rate valour so chastis'd
By modesty.

Saul. Thou dwell'st upon his praise
With needless circumstance. 'Twas nobly done
But others too have fought!

Abner. None, none so bravely

Saul. What follow'd next?

Abner. The shouting Israelites
On the Philistians rush'd, and still pursue
Their routed remnants. In dismay, their bands,
Disorder'd fly, while shouts of loud acclaim
Pursue their brave deliverer. Lo, he comes!
Bearing the giant's head and shining sword,
His well-earn'd trophies.

SAUL, ABNER, DAVID.

[DAVID *bearing* GOLIATH's *head and sword. He kneels and lays both at* SAUL's *feet.*

Saul. Welcome to my heart,
My glorious champion! My deliverer welcome!
How shall I speak the swelling gratitude
Of my full heart! or give thee the high praise
Thy gallant deeds deserve!

David. O mighty king!
Sweet is the breath of praise when given by those
Whose own high merit claims the praise they give.
But let not this one prosperous event,
By heav'n directed, be ascrib'd to me;
I might have fought with equal skill and courage,
And not have gain'd this conquest; then had shame
Harsh obloquy, and foul disgrace, befallen me:
But prosp'rous fortune gains the praise of valour.

Saul. I like not this. In every thing superior!
He soars above me (*aside.*)—Modest youth, thou 'rt right.
And fortune, as thou say'st, deserves the praise
We give to human valour.

David. Rather say
The God of Hosts deserves it.

Saul. Tell me youth,
What is thy name, and what thy father's house?
David. My name is David; Jesse is my sire:
An humble Bethle'mite of Judah's tribe.
Saul. David, the son of Jesse! Sure that name
Has been familiar to me. Nay thy voice
Thy form and features, I remember too,
Though faint and indistinctly.
Abner. In this hero
Behold thy sweet musician; he whose harp
Expell'd the melancholy fiend, whose pow'r
Enslav'd thy spirit.
Saul. This the modest youth,
Whom for his skill and virtues I preferr'd
To bear my armour?
David. I am he, O king!
Saul. Why this concealment? tell me valiant David,
Why didst thou hide thy birth and name till now?
David. O king! I would not aught from favour claim,
Or on remember'd services presume;
But on the strength of my own actions stand
Ungrac'd and unsupported.
Abner. Well he merits
The honours which await him. Why, O king,
Dost thou delay to bless his doubting heart
With his well-earn'd rewards! Thy lovely daughter,
By right of conquest his!
Saul. (*to David.*) True: thou hast won her.
She shall be thine. Yes, a king's word is past.
David. O boundless blessing! What shall she be mine,
For whom contending monarchs might renounce
Their slighted crowns!

[*Sounds of musical instruments heard at a distance. Shouting and singing. A grand procession. Chorus of Hebrew women.*]

Saul. How 's this! what sounds of joy
Salute my ears! What means this needless pomp!
This merry sound of tabret and of harp!
What means these idle instruments of triumph?
These women, who in fair procession move,
Making sweet melody?
Abner. To pay due honour
To David are they come.
Saul. (*aside.*) A rival's praise
Is discord to my ear! They might have spar'd
This idle pageantry; it wounds my soul!

[*Martial symphony: after which, chorus of women sing.*]

I.

Prepare! your festal rites prepare!
Let your triumphs rend the air!
Idol gods shall reign no more:
We the living Lord adore!
Let heathen hosts on human helps repose,
Since Israel's God has routed Israel's foes.

II.

Let remotest nations know
Proud Goliath's overthrow.
Fall'n Philistia, is thy trust,
Dagon mingles with the dust!
Who fears the Lord of Glory, need not fear
The brazen armour or the lifted spear.

III.

See, the routed squadron fly!
Hark the clamours rend the sky!
Blood and carnage stain the field!
See the vanquish'd nations yield!
Dismay and terror fill the frighten'd land,
While conq'ring David routs the trembling band.

IV.

Lo! upon the tented field
Royal Saul has thousands kill'd!
Lo! upon th' ensanguin'd plain
David has ten thousand slain!
Let mighty Saul his vanquish'd thousands tell,
While tenfold triumphs David's victories swell.

BELSHAZZAR:

A SACRED DRAMA.

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations!—*Isaiah.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Belshazzar, king of Babylon.
Nitocris, the queen mother.
Courtiers, Astrologers, Parasites.
Daniel, the Jewish Prophet.
Captive Jews, &c. &c.

Scene—Babylon. Time—Night.

The subject is taken from the fifth chapter of the Prophet Daniel.

PART I.

Scene—Near the palace of Babylon.

DANIEL AND CAPTIVE JEWS.

Dan. Parent of Life and Light! Sole Source of Good!
Whose tender mercies through the tide of time,
In long successive order, have sustain'd,
And sav'd the sons of Israel! Thou whose power
Deliver'd righteous Noah from the flood,
The whelming flood, the grave of human kind!
Oh Thou, whose guardian care and outstretch'd hand

Rescued young Isaac from the lifted arm,
Rais'd, at thy bidding, to devote a son,
An only son, doom'd by his sire to die:
(O saving faith, by such obedience prov'd!
O blest obedience, hallow'd thus by faith!
Thou, who in mercy sav'dst the chosen race
In the wild desert, and didst there sustain them
By wonder-working love, though they rebell'd
And murmur'd at the miracles that sav'd them!
O hear thy servant Daniel! hear and help!
Thou, whose almighty power did after raise
Successive leaders to defend our race;
Who sentest valiant Joshua to the field,
The people's champion, to the conqu'ring field,
Where the revolving planet of the night,
Suspended in her radiant round, was stay'd;
And the bright sun arrested in his course,
Stupendously stood still!

CHORUS OF JEWS.

I.

What ail'd thee, that thou stood'st still,
O sun! nor did thy flaming orb decline!
And thou, O moon! in Ajalon's low vale,
Why didst thou long before thy period shine?

II.

Was it at Joshua's dread command,
The leader of the Israelitish band?
Yes—at a mortal bidding both stood still;
'Twas Joshua's word, but 'twas Jehovah's will.

III.

What all-controlling hand had force
To stop eternal Nature's constant course?
The wand'ring moon to one fix'd spot confine,
But His whose fiat gave them first to shine?

Dan. O Thou! who, when thy discontented host,
Tir'd of Jehovah's rule, desir'd a king,
In anger gav'st them Saul; and then again
Did'st wrest the regal sceptre from his hand
To give it David—David, best belov'd!
Illustrious David! poet, prophet, king;
Thou who did'st suffer Solomon the wise
To build a glorious Temple to thy name,—
O hear thy servants, and forgive us too!
If by severe necessity compell'd,
We worship here—we have no temple now:
Altar or sanctuary none is left.

CHORUS OF JEWS.

O Judah! let thy captive sons deplore
Thy far-fam'd temple's now no more!
Fall'n is thy sacred fane, thy glory gone!
Fall'n is thy temple, Solomon!
Ne'er did Barbaric kings behold,
With all their shining gems, their burnish'd gold,
A fane so perfect, bright, and fair:
For God himself was wont t' inhabit there.
Between the cherubim his glory stood,
While the high-priest alone the dazzling splendour view'd.
How fondly did the Tyrian artist strive,
His name to latest time should live!
Such wealth the stranger wonder'd to behold:
Gold were the tablets, and the vases gold.
Of cedar such an ample store,
Exhausted Lebanon could yield no more.
Bending before the Ruler of the sky,
Well might the royal founder cry,
Fill'd with an holy dread, a rev'rend fear,
Will God in very deed inhabit here?
The heaven of heavens beneath his feet,
Is for the brig.. inhabitant unmeet:
Archangels prostrate wait his high commands,
And will he deign to dwell in temples made with hands?

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Dan. Yes, Thou art ever present, Pow'r Su-
Not circumscrib'd by time, nor fix'd to space,
Confin'd to altars, nor to temples bound.
In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,
In dungeons or on thrones, the faithful find thee!
E'en in the burning caldron thou wast near
To Shadrach and the holy brotherhood:
The unhurt martyrs bless'd Thee in the flames,
They sought, and found Thee; call'd, and Thou wast there.

First Jew. How chang'd our state! Judah, thy glory 's fallen!
Thy joys for hard captivity exchang'd:
And thy sad sons breathe the polluted air
Of Babylon, where deities obscene
Insult the living God; and to his servants,
The priests of wretched idols made with hands,
Show contumelious scorn.

Dan. 'Tis heaven's high will.

Second Jew. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!
If I not fondly cherish thy lov'd image,
E'en in the giddy hour of thoughtless mirth;
If I not rather view thy prostrate walls
Than haughty Babylon's imperial tow'rs—
Then may my tongue refuse to frame the strains
Of sweetest harmony, my rude right hand
Forget, with sounds symphonius, to accord
The harp of Jesse's son to Sion's song.

First Jew. Oft on Euphrates' ever verdant banks
Where drooping willows form a mournful shade
With all the pride which prosp'rous fortunes give,
And all th' unfeeling mirth of happy men,
Th' insulting Babylonians ask a song;
Such songs as erst in better days were sung
By Korah's sons, or heav'n-taught Asaph set
To loftiest measures; then our bursting hearts
Feel all their woes afresh; the galling chain
Of bondage crushes then the free-born soul
With wringing anguish from the trembling lip
Th' unfinish'd cadence falls; and the big tear,
While it relieves, betrays the wo-fraught soul.
For who can view Euphrates' pleasant stream,
Its drooping willows, and its verdant banks,
And not to wounded memory recall
The piny groves of fertile Palestine,
The vales of Solyma, and Jordan's stream!

Dan. Firm faith and deep submission to high heaven
Will teach us to endure without a murmur
What seems so hard. Think what the holy host
Of patriarchs, saints, and prophets have sustain'd,
In the blest cause of truth! And shall not we,
O men of Judah! dare what these have dar'd
And boldly pass through the refining fire
Of fierce affliction? Yes, be witness, Heaven!
Old as I am, I will not shrink at death,
Come in what shape it may, if God so will,
By peril to confirm and prove my faith.

Oh! I would dare yon den of hungry lions,
Rather than pause to fill the task assign'd
By wisdom Infinite. Nor think I boast,
Not in myself, but in thy strength I trust,
Spirit of God!
First Jew. Prophet, thy words support,
And raise our sinking souls.
Dan. Behold yon palace;
There proud Belshazzar keeps his wanton court!
I knew it once beneath another lord,
His grandsire,* who subdu'd Jehoiachin,
And hither brought sad Judah's captive tribes;
And with them brought the rich and precious relics
Of our fam'd temple; all the holy treasure,
The golden vases, and the sacred cups,
Which grac'd, in happier times, the sanctuary.
Second Jew. May HE to whose blest use they were devoted,
Preserve them from pollution; and once more,
In his own gracious time restore the temple!
Dan. I, with some favour'd youths of Jewish race
Was lodg'd in the king's palace, and instructed
In all the various learning of the East;
But HE, on whose great name our fathers call'd,
Preserv'd us from the perils of a court,
Warn'd us to guard our youthful appetites,
And still with holy fortitude reject
The pamp'ring viands Luxury presented;
Fell Luxury; more perilous to youth
Than storms or quicksands, poverty or chains:
Second Jew. He who can guard 'gainst the low baits of sense,
Will find Temptations arrows hurtless strike
Against the brazen shield of Temperance.
For 'tis th' inferior appetites enthral
The man, and quench th' immortal light within him;
The senses take the soul an easy prey,
And sink th' imprison'd spirit into brute.
Dan. Twice,† by the Spirit of God, did I expound
The visions of the king; his soul was touch'd,
And twice did he repent, and prostrate fall
Before the God of Daniel: yet again,
Pow'r, flattery, and prosperity, undid him.
When from the lofty ramparts of his palace
He view'd the splendours of the royal city,
That magazine of wealth, which proud Euphrates
Wafts from each distant corner of the earth;
When he beheld the adamantine tow'rs,
The brazen gates, the bulwarks of his strength,
The pendant gardens, Art's stupendous work;
The wonder of the world! the proud Chaldean,
Mad with th' intoxicating fumes which rise
When uncontroll'd ambition grasps at once
Dominion absolute, and boundless wealth,
Forgot he was a man, forgot his god!
'This mighty Babylon is mine,' he cry'd;
'My wond'rous pow'r, *my* godlike arm achiev'd it.
I scorn submission; own no Deity
Above my own.'—While the blasphemer spoke,
The wrath of Heav'n inflicted instant vengeance;
Stripp'd him of that bright reason he abus'd;
And drove him from the cheerful haunts of men,
A naked, wretched, helpless, senseless thing;
Companion of the brutes, his equals now.
First Jew. Nor does his impious grandson, proud Belshazzar,
Fall short of his offences; nay, he wants
The valiant spirit and the active soul
Of his progenitor; for Pleasure's slave,
Though bound in silken chains, and only tied
In flowery fetters, seeming light and loose,
Is more subdu'd than the rash casual victim
Of anger or ambition; these indeed
Burn with a fiercer but a short-lived fire;
While pleasure with a constant flame consumes,
War slays her thousands, but destructive Pleasure,
More fell, more fatal, her ten thousands slays:
The young luxurious king she fondly woos
In ev'ry shape of am'rous blandishment;
With adulation smooth ensnares his soul;
With love betrays him, and with wine inflames.
She strews her magic poppies o'er his couch,
And with delicious opiates charms him down,
In fatal slumbers bound. Though Babylon
Is now, invested by the warlike troops
Of royal Cyrus, Persia's valiant prince;
Who, in conjunction with the Median king;
Darius, fam'd for conquest, now prepares
To storm the city: not the impending horrors
Which ever wait a siege have pow'r to wake
To thought or sense th' intoxicated king.
Dan. E'en in this night of universal dread,
A mighty army threat'ning at the gates;
This very night, as if in scorn of danger,
The dissolute Belshazzar holds a feast
Magnificently impious, meant to honour
Belus, the fav'rite Babylonish idol.
Lew'd parasites compose his wanton court,
Whose impious flatt'ries sooth his monstrous crimes:
They justify his vices and extol
His boastful phrase, as if he were some god:
Whate'er he says, they say; what he commands,
Implicitly they do; they echo back
His blasphemies with shouts of loud acclaim;
And when he wounds the tortur'd ear of Virtue,
They cry "All hail! Belshazzar live for ever!"
To-night a thousand nobles fill his hall,
Princes, and all the dames who grace the court;
All but his virtuous mother, sage Nitocris:
Ah! how unlike the impious king her son!
She never mingles in the midnight fray,
Nor crowns the guilty banquet with her presence.
The royal fair is rich in every virtue
Which can adorn the queen or grace the woman.
But for the wisdom of her prudent counsels
This wretched empire had been long undone.
Not fam'd Semiramis, Assyria's pride,
Could boast a brighter mind or firmer soul;
Beneath the gentle reign of Merodach,*
Her royal lord, our nation tasted peace.
Our captive monarch, sad Jehoiachin,
Grown gray in a close prison's horrid gloom,
He freed from bondage; brought the hoary king

* Nebuchadnezzar.
† Daniel, chap. ii. and iv.

* 2 Kings, chap. xxiv.

To taste once more the long-forgotten sweets
Of liberty and light, sustain'd his age,
Pour'd in his wounds the lenient balm of kindness,
And blest his setting hour of life with peace.
[*Sound of trumpets is heard at a distance.*
First Jew. That sound proclaims the banquet is begun.
Second Jew. Hark! the licentious uproar grows more loud,
The vaulted roof resounds with shouts of mirth,
And the firm palace shakes! Retire my friends;
This madness is not meet for sober ears.
If any of our race were found so near,
'Twould but expose us to the rude attack
Of ribaldry obscene and impious jests
From these mad sons of Belial, more inflam'd
To deeds of riot by the wanton feast.
Dan. Here part we then! but when again to meet
Who knows, save heaven? Yet, O my friends! I feel
An impulse more than human stir my breast.
Wrapt in prophetic vision,* I behold
Things hid as yet from mortal sight. I see
The dart of vengeance tremble in the air,
Ere long to pierce the impious king. E'en now
The desolating angel stalks abroad,
And brandishes aloft the two-edg'd sword
Of retribution keen; he soon will strike,
And Babylon shall weep as Sion wept.
Pass but a little while, and you shall see
This queen of cities prostrate on the earth.
This haughty mistress of the kneeling world,
How shall she sit dishonour'd in the dust,
In tarnish'd pomp and solitary wo!
How shall she shroud her glories in the dark,
And in opprobrious silence hide her head!
Lament, O virgin daughter of Chaldea!
For thou shalt fall! imperial queen, shalt fall!
No more Sidonian robes shall grace thy limbs.
To purple garments sackcloth shall succeed,
And sordid dust and ashes shall supply
The od'rous nard and cassia. Thou, who said'st
I AM, and there is none beside me: thou,
E'en thou, imperial Babylon, shalt fall!
Thy glory quite eclips'd! The pleasant sound
Of viol and of harp shall charm no more;
Nor song of Syrian damsels shall be heard,
Responsive to the lute's luxurious note:
But the loud bittern's cry, the raven's croak,
The bat's fell scream, the lonely owl's dull plaint,
And ev'ry hideous bird, with ominous shriek,
Shall scare affrighted Silence from thy walls:
While Desolation, snatching from the hand
Of Time the scythe of ruin, sits aloft,
Or stalks in dreadful majesty abroad.
I see th' exterminating fiend advance,
E'en now I see her glare with horrid joy,
See tower's imperial mould'ring at her touch;
She glances on the broken battlement,
She eyes the crumbling column, and enjoys
The work of ages prostrate in the dust—
Then, pointing to the mischiefs she has made,
Exulting cries, This once was Babylon!

* See the Prophecies of Isaiah, chap. xlvii. and others.

PART II.

Scene—the court of Belshazzar. The king seated on a magnificent throne. Princes, nobles, and attendants. Ladies of the court. Music —A superb banquet.

1*st cour.* (*rises and kneels.*) HAIL mighty king!
2*d cour.* Belshazzar, live for ever!
3*d cour.* Sun of the world, and light of kings, all hail!
4*th cour.* With lowly rev'rence, such as best becomes
The humblest creatures of imperial power,
Behold a thousand nobles bend before thee!
Princes far fam'd, and dames of high deseent:
Yet all this pride of wealth, this boast of beauty,
Shrinks into nought before thine awful eye!
And lives or dies as the king frowns or smiles!
Bel. This is such homage as becomes your loves.
And suits the mighty monarch of mankind.
5*th cour.* The bending world should prostrate thus before thee;
And pay not only praise but adoration!
Belshazzar (*rises and comes forward.*)
Let dull Philosophy preach self-denial;
Let envious Poverty and snarling Age
Proudly declaim against the joys they know not.
Let the deluded Jews, who fondly hope
Some fancied heaven hereafter, mortify,
And lose the actual blessings of this world
To purchase others which may never come.
Our gods may promise less, but give us more,
Ill could my ardent spirit be content
With meagre abstinence and hungry hope.
Let those misjudging Israelites, who want
The nimble spirits and the active soul,
Call their blunt feelings virtue: let them drudge,
In regular progression, through the round
Of formal duty and of daily toil;
And when they want the genius to be happy,
Believe their harsh austerity is goodness.
If there be gods, they meant we should enjoy:
Why give us else these tastes and appetites?
And why the means to crown them with indulgence?
To burst the feeble bonds which hold the vulgar,
Is noble daring.
1*st cour.* And is therefore worthy
The high imperial spirit of Belshazzar.
2*d cour.* Behold a banquet which the gods might share!
Bel. To-night, my friends, your monarch shall be blest
With ev'ry various joy; to-night is ours;
Nor shall the envious gods, who view our bliss,
And sicken as they view, to-night disturb us.
Bring all the richest spices of the East;
The od'rous cassia and the dropping myrrh,
The liquid amber and the fragant gums,
Rob Gilead of its balms, Belshazzar bids,
And leave the Arabian groves without an odour.
Bring freshest flow'rs, exhaust the blooming spring,
Twine the green myrtle with the short-liv'd rose;
And ever, as the blushing garland fades,
We 'll learn to snatch the fugitive delight,

And grasp the flying joy ere it escapes us.
Come—fill the smiling goblet for the king;
Belshazzar will not let a moment pass
Unmark'd by some enjoyment! The full bowl
Let every guest partake!
[*Courtiers kneel and drink.*
1st cour Here's to the king!
Light of the world, and glory of the earth,
Whose word is fate!
Bel. Yes; we are likest gods
When we have pow'r, and use it. What is wealth
But the rich means to gratify desire?
I will not have a wish, a hope, a thought,
That shall not know fruition. What is empire?
The privilege to punish and enjoy:
To feel our pow'r in making others fear it;
To taste of Pleasure's cup till we grow giddy,
And think ourselves immortal! This is empire!
My ancestors scarce tasted of its joys:
Shut from the sprightly world, and all its charms,
In cumbrous majesty, in sullen state
And dull unsocial dignity they liv'd;
Far from the sight of an admiring world,
That world, whose gaze makes half the charms of greatness;
They nothing knew of empire but the name,
Or saw it in the looks of trembling slaves;
And all they felt of royalty was care.
But I will see, and know it of myself;
Youth, Wealth, and Greatness court me to be blest,
And Pow'r and Pleasure draw with equal force
And sweet attraction: both I will embrace
In quick succession; this is Pleasure's day;
Ambition will have time to reign hereafter;
It is the proper appetite of age.
The lust of pow'r shall lord it uncontroll'd,
When all the gen'rous feelings grow obtuse,
And stern Dominion holds, with rigid hand,
His iron rein, and sits and sways alone.
But youth is Pleasure's hour!
1st cour. Perish the slave
Who, with official counsel would oppose
The king's desire, whose slightest wish is law!
Bel. Now strike the loud-ton'd lyre and softer lute;
Let me have music, with the nobler aid
Of poesy. Where are those cunning men
Who boast, by chosen sounds, and measur'd sweetness,
To set the busy spirits in a flame,
And cool them at their will? who know the art
To call the hidden powers of numbers forth,
And make that pliant instrument, the mind,
Yield to the pow'rful sympathy of sound,
Obedient to the master's artful hand,
Such magic is song! Then give me song;
Yet not at first such soul dissolving strains
As melt the soften'd sense; but such bold measures
As may inflame my spirit to despise
Th' ambitious Persian, that presumptuous boy,
Who rashly dares e'en now invest our city,
And menaces th' invincible Belshazzar.
[*A grand concert of music, after which an ode.*]
In vain shall Persian Cyrus dare
With great Belshazzar wage unequal war:
In vain Darius shall combine,
Darius leader of the Median line;
While fair Euphrates' stream our walls protects
And great Belshazzar's self our fate directs.
War and famine threat in vain,
While this demi-god shall reign!
Let Persia's prostrate king confess his pow'r,
And Media's monarch dread his vengeful hour.
On Dura's* ample plain behold
Immortal Belus,† whom the nations own;
Sublime he stands in burnish'd gold,
And richest offerings his bright altars crown.
To-night his deity we here adore,
And due libations speak his mighty pow'r.
Yet Belus' self not more we own
Than great Belshazzar on Chaldea's throne.
Great Belshazzar like a God,
Rules the nations with a nod!
To great Belshazzar be the goblet crown'd!
Belshazzar's name the echoing roofs rebound!
Belsh. Enough! the kindling rapture fires my brain,
And my heart dances to the flattering sounds,
I feel myself a god! Why not a god!
What were the deities our fathers worship'd?
What was great Nimrod our imperial founder?
What greater Belus, to whose pow'r divine
We raise to-night the banquet and the song
But youthful heroes, mortal, like myself,
Who by their daring earn'd divinity?
They were but men: nay some were less than men,
Though now rever'd as gods. What was Anubis,
Whom Egypt's sapient sons adore? A dog!
And shall not I, young, valiant, and a king,
Dare more? do more? exceed the boldest flights
Of my progenitors?—Fill me more wine,
To cherish and exalt the young idea. (*he drinks*)
Ne'er did Olympian Jupiter himself
Quaff such immortal draughts.
1st cour. What could that Canaan,
That heaven in hope, that nothing in possession,
That air-built bliss of the deluded Jews,
That promis'd land of milk and flowing honey,
What could that fancy'd Paradise bestow
To match these generous juices?
Belsh. Hold—enough!
Thou hast rous'd a thought. By Heav'n I will enjoy it:
A glorious thought! which will exalt to rapture
The pleasure of the banquet, and bestow
A yet untasted relish of delight.
1st cour. What means the king?
Belsh. The Jews! said'st thou the Jews!
1st cour. I spoke of that undone, that outcast people,
Those tributary creatures of thy pow'r,
The captives of thy will, whose very breath
Hangs on the sovereign pleasure of the king.
Belsh. When that abandoned race was hither brought,

* Daniel, chap. iii.

† See a very fine description of the temple of this idol.

——The tow'ring fane
Of Bel, Chaldean Jove, surpassing far
That Doric temple, which the Elean chiefs
Rais'd to their thunderer from the spoils of war,
Or that Ionic, where th' Ephesian bow'd
To Dian, queen of heaven. Eight towers arise,
Each above each, immeasurable height,
A monument at once of eastern pride,
And slavish superstition, &c.

Judah Restored, b. i.

Were not the choicest treasures of their temple,
(Devoted to their God, and held most precious)
Among the spoils which grac'd Nebassar's* triumphs,
And lodg'd in Babylon?
1st cour. O king! they were.
2d cour. The Jews, with superstitious awe, behold
These sacred symbols of their ancient faith:
Nor has captivity abated aught
The rev'rend love they bear these holy reliques.
Though we deride their law, and scorn their persons,
Yet never have we yet to human use
Devoted these rich vessels set apart
To sacred purposes.
Belsh. I joy to hear it!
Go—fetch them hither. They shall grace our banquet.
Does no one stir? Belshazzar disobey'd?
And yet you live? Whence comes this strange reluctance?
This new-born rev'rence for the helpless Jews?
This fear to injure those who can't revenge it?
Send to the sacred treasury in haste,
Let all be hither brought;—who answers dies.
[*They go out.*
The mantling wine a higher joy will yield,
Pour'd from the precious flaggons which adorn'd
Their far-fam'd temple, now in ashes laid.
Oh! 'twill exalt the pleasure into transport,
To gall those whining, praying Israelites!
I laugh to think what wild dismay will seize them
When they shall learn the use that has been made
Of all their holy trumpery!
[*The vessels are brought in.*
2d cour. It comes;
A goodly show! how bright with gold and gems!
Far fitter for a youthful monarch's board
Than the cold shrine of an unheeding God.
Belsh. Fill me that massy goblet to the brim.
Now, Abraham! let thy wretched race expect
The fable of their faith to be fulfill'd;
Their second temple and their promis'd king!
Now will they see the god they vainly serve
Is impotent to help; for had he pow'r
To hear and grant their pray'r, he would prevent
This profanation.
[*As the king is going to drink, thunder is heard: he starts from the throne, spies a hand, which writes on the wall these words,* MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. *He lets fall the goblet, and stands in an attitude of speechless horror. All start and seem terrified.*]
1st cour. (*after a long pause.* Oh, transcendant horror!
2d cour. What may this mean? The king is greatly mov'd!
3d cour. Nor is it strange—who unappall'd can view it?
Those sacred cups! I doubt we 've gone too far!
1st cour. Observe the fear-struck king! his starting eyes
Roll horribly. Thrice he essay'd to speak,
And thrice his tongue refus'd.
Belsh. (*in a low trembling voice.*) Ye mysti, words!
Thou semblance of an hand! illusive forms!
Ye wild fantastic images, what are ye?
Dread shadows, speak! Explain your dark intent!
Ye will not answer me—Alas! I feel
I am a mortal now—My failing limbs
Refuse to bear me up. I am no god!
Gods do not tremble thus—Support me, hold me:
These loosen'd joints, these knees which smite each other,
Betray I'm but a man—a weak one too!
1st cour. In truth, 'tis passing strange, and full of horror!
Belsh. Send for the learn'd magicians, every sage
Who deals in wizard spells and magic charms.
[*Some go out.*
1st court. How fares my lord the king?
Besh. Am I a king?
What pow'r have I? Ye lying slaves, I am not.
Oh, soul distracting sight! but is it real?
Perhaps 'tis fancy all, or the wild dream
Of mad distemperature, the fumes of wine!
I'll look on it no more!—So—now I'm well!
I am a king again, and know not fear.
And yet my eyes will seek that fatal spot,
And fondly dwell upon the sight that blast them!
Again, 'tis there! it is not fancy's work,
I see it still! 'tis written on the wall!
I see the writing, but the viewless writer,
Who! what is he! Oh, horror! horror! horror.
It cannot be the God of these poor Jews;
For what is He, that he can thus affliet?
2d cour. Let not my Lord the king be thus dismay'd.
3d cour. Let not a phantom, an illusive shade
Disturb the peace of him who rules the world.
Belsh. No more, ye wretched sycophants! no more!
The sweetest note which flatt'ry now can strike,
Harsh and discordant grates upon my soul.
Talk not of pow'r to one so full of fear,
So weak, so impotent! Look on that wall;
If thou wouldst soothe my soul explain the writing,
And thou shalt be my oracle, my God!
O tell me whence it came, and what it means,
And I'll believe I am again a king!
Friends! princes! ease my troubled breast, and say
What do the mystic characters portend?
1st court. 'Tis not in us, O king, to ease thy spirit;
We are not skill'd in those mysterious arts
Which wait the midnight studies of the sage
But of the deep diviners thou shalt learn,
The wise astrologers, the sage magicians,
Who, of events unborn, take secret note,
And hold deep commerce with the unseen world
Enter astologers, magicians, &c. &c.
Belsh. Approach, ye sages, 'tis the king commands. [*They kneel.*
Astrologers. Hail, mighty king of Babylon!
Belsh. Nay, rise

* The name of Nebuchadnezzar not being reducible to verse, I have adopted that of Nebassar, on the authority of the ingenious and learned Author of 'Judah Restored.'

I do not need your homage, but your help;
The world may worship, you must counsel me.
He who declares the secret of the king,
No common honours shall await his skill;
Our empire shall be tax'd for his reward,
And he himself shall name the gift he wishes.
A splendid scarlet robe shall grace his limbs,
His neck a princely chain of gold adorn:
Meet honours for such wisdom: He shall rule
The third in rank throughout our Babylon.

2d Astr. Such recompence becomes Belshazzar's bounty;
Let the king speak the secret of his soul;
Which heard, his humble creatures shall unfold.

Belsh. (*points to the wall.*) Be 't so—look there—behold those characters!
Nay, do not start, for I will know their meaning!
Ha! answer; speak, or instant death awaits you!
What, dumb! all dumb! where is your boasted skill? [*They confer together.*
Keep them asunder—no confederacy——
No secret plots to make your tales agree,
Speak, slaves, and dare to let me know the worst! [*They kneel.*

1st Astr. O, let the king forgive his faithful servants!

2d Astr. O mitigate our threatened doom of death;
If we declare, with mingled grief and shame,
We cannot tell the secret of the king,
Nor what these mystic characters portend!

Belsh. Off with their heads! Ye shall not live an hour!
Curse on your shallow arts, your lying science!
'Tis thus you practice on the credulous world,
Who think you wise because themselves are weak!
But miscreants, ye shall die! the pow'r to punish
Is all that I have left me of a king.

1st cour. Great sire, suspend their punishment a while;
Behold Nitocris comes, thy royal mother!

Enter QUEEN.

Queen. O my misguided son!
Well may'st thou wonder to behold me here:
For I have ever shunn'd this scene of riot,
Where wild intemperance and dishonour'd mirth
Hold festival impure. Yet, O Belshazzar!
I could not hear the wonders which befel,
And leave thee to the workings of despair:
For, spite of all the anguish of my soul
At thy offences, I'm thy mother still!
Against the solemn purpose I had form'd
Never to mix in this unhallow'd crowd,
The wondrous story of the mystic writing,
Of strange and awful import, brings me here;
If hap'ly I may show some likely means
To fathom this dark mystery.

Bel. Speak, O queen!
My list'ning soul shall hang upon thy words,
And prompt obedience follow them!

Queen. Then hear me.
Among thy captive tribes which hither came
To grace Nebassar's triumph, there was brought
A youth nam'd Daniel, favour'd by high Heav'n
With pow'r to look into the secret page
Of dim Futurity's mysterious volume.
The spirit of the holy gods is in him:
No vision so obscure, so deeply hid,
No sentence so perplex'd but he can solve it.
He can unfold the dark decrees of fate,
Can trace each crooked labyrinth of thought,
Each winding maze of doubt, and make it clear
And palpable to sense. He twice explain'd
The monarch's mystic dreams. The holy seer
Saw, with prophetic spirit, what befel
The king long after. For his wond'rous skill
He was rewarded, honour'd, and caress'd,
And with the rulers of Chaldea rank'd:
Though now, alas! thrown by, his services
Forgotten or neglected.

Bel. Send with speed
A message to command the holy man
To meet us on the instant.

Nitocris. I already
Have sent to ask his presence at the palace,
And lo! in happy season see he comes.

Enter Daniel.

Bel. Welcome, thrice venerable sage! approach.
Art thou that Daniel whom my great forefather
Brought hither with the captive tribes of Judah!

Daniel. I am, O king!

Bel. Then, pardon, holy prophet;
Nor let a just resentment of thy wrongs,
And long neglected merit, shut thy heart
Against a king's request, a suppliant king!

Daniel. The God I worship teaches to forgive.

Bel. Then let thy words bring comfort to my soul.
I've heard the spirit of the gods is in thee;
That thou can'st look into the fates of men,
With prescience more than human!

Daniel. Hold, O king!
Wisdom is from above; 'tis God's own gift,
I of myself am nothing; but from Him
The little knowledge I possess, I hold:
To him be all the glory!

Bel. Then, O Daniel!
If thou indeed dost boast that wond'rous gift,
That faculty divine; look there, and tell me!
O say, what mean those mystic characters?
Remove this load of terror from my soul,
And honours, such as kings can give, await thee.
Thou shalt be great beyond thy soul's ambition,
And rich above thy wildest dream of wealth:
Clad in the scarlet robe our nobles wear,
And grac'd with princely ensigns thou shalt stand
Near our own throne, and third within our empire.

Daniel. O mighty king, thy gifts with thee remain
And let thy high rewards on others fall.
The princely ensign, nor the scarlet robe,
Nor yet to be the third within thy realm,
Can touch the soul of Daniel. Honour, fame,
All that the world calls great, thy crown itself,
Could never satisfy the vast ambition
Of an immortal spirit; I aspire
Beyond thy pow'r of giving; my high hopes
Reach also to a crown—but 'tis a crown
Unfading and eternal.

1st cour. Wond'rous man!

Our priests teach no such notions.
Daniel. Yet, O king!
Though all unmov'd by grandeur or by gift,
I will unfold the high decree of Heaven,
And straight declare the mystery.
Bel. Speak, O prophet!
Daniel. Prepare to hear what kings have seldom heard;
Prepare to hear what courtiers seldom tell,
Prepare to hear the Truth. The mighty God,
Who rules the sceptres and the hearts of kings,
Gave thy renown'd forefather* here to reign,
With such extent of empire, weight of pow'r,
And greatness of dominion, the wide earth
Trembled beneath the terror of his name,
And kingdoms stood or fell as he decreed.
Oh! dangerous pinnacle of pow'r supreme!
Who can stand safe upon its treach'rous top,
Behold the gazing prostrate world below,
Whom depth and distance into pigmies shrink,
And not grow giddy! Babylon's great king
Forgot he was a man, a helpless man,
Subject to pain, and sin, and death, like others!
But who shall fight against Omnipotence?
Or who hath harden'd his obdurate heart
Against the Majesty of Heav'n, and prosper'd?
The God he hath insulted was aveng'd;
From empire, from the joys of social life,
He drove him forth; extinguish'd reason's lamp;
Quench'd that bright spark of deity within;
Compell'd him with the forest brutes to roam
For scanty pasture; and the mountain dews
Fell, cold and wet, on his defenceless head,
Till he confess'd,—Let men, let monarchs hear!
Till he confess'd, PRIDE WAS NOT MADE FOR MAN.
Nicotris. O awful instance of divine displeasure!
Bel. Proceed! my soul is wrapt in fix'd attention!
Daniel. O king! thy grandsire not in vain had sinn'd,
If, from his error thou hadst learnt the truth.
The story of his fall thou oft has heard,
But has it taught thee wisdom? Thou like him,
Hast been elate with pow'r, and mad with pride,
Like him, thou hast defy'd the living God.
Nay, to bold thoughts hast added deeds more bold.
Thou hast outwrought the pattern he bequeath'd thee,
And quite outgone example; hast profan'd
With impious hand, the vessels of the temple:
Those vessels sanctify'd to holiest use,
Thou hast polluted with unhallow'd lips,
And made the instruments of foul debauch,
Thou hast ador'd the gods of wood and stone,
Vile, senseless deities, the work of hands:
But HE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,
In whom exists thy life, thy soul, thy breath,
On whom thy being hangs, thou hast deny'd.
1*st cour.* (*aside to the others.*) With what an holy boldness he reproves him!
2*d cour.* Such is the fearless confidence of virtue!
And such the righteous courage those maintain
Who plead the cause of truth. The smallest word
He utters had been death to half the court.

* Nebuchadnezzar.

Bel. Now let the mystic writing be explain'd,
Thrice venerable sage!
Daniel. O mighty king!
Hear then its awful import: *Heav'n has numb*
ber'd
Thy days of royalty, and *soon will end them.*
Our God has weigh'd thee in the even balance
Of his own holy law, and *finds thee wanting:*
And last *thy kingdom shall be wrested from thee.*
And know, *the Mede and Persian shall possess it*
Bel. (*starts up.*) Prophet, when shall this be?
Daniel. In God's own time;
Here my commission ends; I may not utter
More than thou'st heard; but oh! remember king!
Thy days are number'd: hear, repent and live!
Bel. Say, prophet, what can penitence avail,
If Heaven's decrees immutably are fix'd,
Can pray'rs avert our fate?
Daniel. They change our hearts,
And thus dispose Omnipotence to mercy.
'Tis man that alters; God is still the same.
Conditional are all Heav'n's covenants:
And when th' uplifted thunder is withheld,
'Tis pray'r that deprecates th' impending bolt.
Good Hezekiah's* days were number'd too;
But penitence and faith were mighty pleas:
At Mercy's throne they never plead in vain.
[*He is going.*
Bel. Stay, prophet, and receive thy promis'd gift;
The scarlet robe and princely chain are thine:
And let my herald publish through the land
That Daniel stands, in dignity and pow'r,
The third in Babylon. These just rewards
Thou well may'st claim, though sad thy prophecy!
Queen. Be not deceiv'd my son! nor let thy soul
Snatch an uncertain moment's treach'rous rest,
On the dread brink of that tremendous gulf
Which yawns beneath thee.
Daniel. O unhappy king,
Know what *must* happen once *may* happen soon.
Remember that 'tis terrible to meet
Great evils unprepar'd! and, O Belshazzar!
In the wild moment of dismay and death,
Remember thou wast warn'd! and, O remember,
Warnings despis'd are condemnations then.
[*Exeunt Daniel and Queen.*
Bel. 'Tis well—my soul shakes off its load of care:
'Tis only the obscure is terrible.
Imagination frames events unknown,
In wild fantastic shapes of hideous ruin,
And what it fears creates!—I know the worst;
And awful is that worst as fear could feign:
But distant are the ills I have to dread!
What is remote may be uncertain too!—
Ha! princes! hope breaks in!—This may not be.
1*st cour.* Perhaps this Daniel is in league with Persia;
And brib'd by Cyrus to report these horrors,
To weaken and impede the mighty plans
Of thy imperial mind.
Bel. 'Tis very like.
2*d cour.* Return we to the banquet.
Bel. Dare we venture?

* 2 Chron. chap. xxxiii. Isaiah, chap. xxxviii.

3d. cour. Let not this dreaming seer disturb the king.
Against the pow'r of Cyrus and the Mede
Is Babylon secure. Her brazen gates
Mock all attempts to force them. Proud Euphrates,
A wat'ry bulwark, guards our ample city
From all assailants. And within the walls
Of this stupendous capital are lodg'd
Such vast provisions, such exhaustless stores,
As a twice ten years siege could never waste.
Bel. (*embraces him.*) My better genius! Safe in such resources,
I mock the prophet.—Turn me to the banquet!
[*As they are going to resume their places at the banquet, a dreadful uproar is heard, tumultuous cries, and warlike sounds. All stand terrified. Enter soldiers with their swords drawn and wounded.*]
Soldier. Oh, helpless Babylon! Oh, wretched king!
Chaldea is no more, the Mede has conquer'd!
The victor Cyrus, like a mighty torrent
Comes rushing on, and marks his way with ruin!
Destruction is at hand; escape or perish.
Bel. Impossible! Villain and slave thou ly'st!
Euphrates and the brazen gates secure us.
While those remain, Belshazzar laughs at danger.
Soldier. Euphrates is diverted from its course;
The brazen gates are burst, the city 's taken;
Thyself a pris'ner, and thy empire lost.
Bel. Oh, prophet! I remember thee indeed!
[*He runs out. They follow in the utmost confusion.*]

Enter several Jews, Medes, and Babylonians.

1*st Jew.* He comes, he comes! the long predicted prince,
Cyrus, the destin'd instrument of Heaven,
To free our captive nation, and restore
Jehovah's temple. Carnage marks his way,
And Conquest sits upon his plume crown'd helm.
2*d Jew.* What noise is that?
1*st Jew.* Hark! 'tis Belshazzar's voice!
Bel. (*without.*) O soldier, spare my life, and aid my flight!
Such treasures shall reward the gentle deed
As Persia never saw. I 'll be thy slave;
I 'll yield my crown to Cyrus; I 'll adore
His gods and thine—I 'll kneel and kiss thy feet,
And worship thee.—It is not much I ask—
I 'll live in bondage, beggary and pain,
So thou but let me live.
Soldier. Die, tyrant, die!
Bel. O Daniel! Daniel! Daniel!

Enter Soldier.

Soldier. Belshazzar 's dead!
The wretched king breath'd out his furious soul
In that tremendous groan.
1*st Jew.* Belshazzar's dead!
Then, Judah, art thou free! The tyrant's fallen!
Jerusalem, Jerusalem is free!

PART III.

Enter Daniel *and Jews.*

Dan. Bel boweth down,* and haughty Nebo stoops!
The idols fall; the god and worshipper
Together fall! together they bow down!
Each other, or themselves they cannot save.
O, Babylon, where is thy refuge now?
Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, meant to save,
Pervert thee; and thy blessing is thy bane!
Where are thy brutish deities, Chaldea?
Where are thy gods of gold?—Oh, Lord of life!
Thou very God! so fall thy foes before thee!
1*st Jew.* So fell beneath the terrors of Thy name
The idol Chemosh, Moab's empty trust;
So Ammonitish Moloch sunk before Thee;
So fell Philistine Dagon: so shall fall,
To time's remotest period, all thy foes,
Triumphant Lord of Hosts!
Daniel. How chang'd our fate!
Not for myself, O Judah! but for thee
I shed these tears of joy. For I no more
Must view the cedars which adorn the brow
Of Syrian Lebanon; no more shall see
Thy pleasant stream, O Jordan! nor the flocks
Which whiten all the mountains of Judea;
No more these eyes delighted shall review
Or Carmel's heights, or Sharon's flow'ry vales.
I must remain in Babylon! So Heav'n,
To whose awards I bow me, has decreed.
I ne'er shall see thee, Salem! I am old;
And few and toilsome are my days to come.
But we shall meet in those celestial climes,
Compar'd with which created glories sink;
Where sinners shall have pow'r to harm no more,
And martyr'd Virtue rests her weary head.
Though ere my day of promis'd grace shall come,
I shall be tried by perils strange and new;
Nor shall I taste of death, so have I learn'd,
Till I have seen the captive tribes restor'd.
1*st Jew.* And shall we view, once more, thy hallow'd towers,
Imperial Salem?
Dan. Yes, my youthful friends!
You shall behold the second temple rise,†
With grateful ecstacy; but we, your sires,
Now bent with hoary age; we, whose charm'd eyes
Behold the matchless glories of the first,
Should weep, rememb'ring that we once had seen
That model of perfection!
2*d Jew.* Never more
Shall such a wond'rous structure grace the earth!
Dan. Well have you borne affliction, men of Judah!
Well have sustain'd your portion of distress;
And, unrepining, drank the bitter dregs
Of adverse fortune! Happier days await you.
O guard against the perils of success!
Prosperity dissolves the yielding soul,
And the bright sun of shining fortune melts
The firmest virtue down. Beware my friends,
Be greatly cautious of prosperity!
Defend your sliding hearts; and, trembling, think
How those, who buffetted Affliction's waves

* Isaiah, chap. xlvi. † Ezra, chap. i.

With vig'rous virtue, sunk in Pleasure's calm.
He,* who of special grace had been allow'd
To rear the hallow'd fane to Israel's God,
By wealth corrupted, and by ease debauch'd,
Forsook the God to whom he rais'd the fane;
And, sunk in sensual sloth, consum'd his days
In vile idolatrous rites,—Nor think, my sons,
That virtue in sequester'd *solitude*
Is always found. Within the inmost soul
The hidden tempter lurks; nor less betrays
In the still seeming safety of retreat,
Than where the world her snares entangling spreads,
More visible to sense. Guard every thought:
Who thinks himself secure is half undone;
For Sin, unwatch'd, may reach the sanctuary:
'Tis not the place preserves us. Righteous Lot
Stem'd the strong current of Corruption's tide,
E'en in polluted Sodom; safe he liv'd,
While circumspective Virtue's watchful eye
Was anxiously awake: but in the shade,
Far from the obvious perils which alarm
With palpable temptation, secret sin
Ensnar'd his soul; he trusted in himself;
Security betray'd him, and he fell.

2*d. Jew.* Thy prudent counsels in our hearts shall live,
As if a pen of adamant had grav'd them.

1*st Jew.* The dawn approaches; let us part, my friend,
Secure of peace, since tyranny is fallen.

Dan. So perish all thine enemies, O Lord;
So mighty God, shall perish all who seek
Corrupted pleasures in the turbid waves
Of life's polluted stream, and madly quit
The living fountain of perennial grace!

* Solomon.

DANIEL:

A SACRED DRAMA.

The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.
Proverbs of Solomon.

On peut des plus grands rois surprendre la justice.
Incapable de tromper,
Ils out peinc a s'echapper
Des pieges de l'artifice.
Un cœur noble ne peut soupconner en autrui
La bassesse et la malice
Qu'il ne sent point en lui.
Esther. Tragedie de Racine.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DARIUS, king of Media and Babylon.
PHARNACES, SORANUS, courtiers, enemies to Daniel.
ARASPES, a young Median lord, friend and convert to Daniel.
DANIEL.

Scene—The city of Babylon.

The subject is taken from the sixth chapter of the prophet Daniel.

PART I.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

Phar. YES!—I have noted with a jealous eye,
The pow'r of this new fav'rite! Daniel reigns,
And not Darius! Daniel guides the springs
Which move this mighty empire. High he sits,
Supreme in favour with both prince and people.
Where is the spirit of our Median lords,
Tamely to crouch and bend the supple knee
To this new god! By Mithras, 'tis too much!
Shall great Arbaces' race to Daniel bow!
A forcigner, a captive, and a Jew?
Something must be devis'd, and that right soon,
To shake his credit.

Sor. Rather hope to shake
The mountain pine, whose twisting fibres clasp
The earth, deep rooted! Rather hope to shake
The Scythian Taurus from his central base!
No—Daniel sits too absolute in pow'r,
Too firm in favour, for the keenest shaft
Of nicely-aiming jealousy to reach him.

Phar. Rather he sits too high to sit securely,
Yes! he has reach'd that pinnacle of pow'r
Which closely touches on depression's verge.
Hast thou then liv'd in courts? hast thou grown gray
Beneath the mask a subtle statesman wears,
To hide his secret soul, and dost not know
That of all fickle Fortune's transient gifts,
Favour is most deceitful? 'Tis a beam,
Which darts uncertain brightness for a moment!
The faint precarious, fickly shine of pow'r;
Giv'n without merit, by caprice withdrawn.
No trifle is so small as what obtains,
Save that which loses favour, 'tis a breath,
Which hangs upon a smile! A look, a word,

A frown, the air-built tower of fortune shakes,
And down the unsubstantial fabric falls!
Darius, just and clement as he is,
If I mistake not, may be wrought upon
By prudent wiles, by Flatt'ry's pleasant cup,
Administer'd with caution.
Sor. But the means?
For Daniel's life (a foe must grant him that)
Is so replete with goodness, so adorn'd
With every virtue so exactly squar'd
By wisdom's nicest rules, 'twill be most hard
To charge him with the shadow of offence.
Pure is his fame as Scythia's mountain snows,
When not a breath pollutes them! O Pharnaces,
I've scann'd the actions of his daily life
With all th' industrious malice of a foe;
And nothing meets mine eye but deeds of honour!
In office pure; for equitable acts
Renown'd: in justic and impartial truth,
The Grecian Themis is not more severe.
Phar. By yon bright sun, thou blazon'st forth his praise
As if with rapture thou did'st read the page
Where these fair deeds are written!
Sor. Thou mistak'st
I only meant to show what cause we have
To hate and fear him. I but meant to paint
His popular virtues and eclipsing merit
Then for devotion and religious zeal,
Who so renown'd as Daniel? Of his law
Observant in th' extreme. Thrice ev'ry day
With prostrate reverence, he adores his God:
With superstitious awe his face he turns
Tow'rds his belov'd Jerusalem, as if
Some local, partial God, might there be found
To hear his supplication. No affair
Of state, no business so importunate,
No pleasure so alluring, no employ
Of such high import, to seduce his zeal
From this observance due!
Phar. There, there he falls!
Enough my friend! His piety destroys him.
There, at the very footstool of his God,
Where he implores protection, there I'll crush him.
Sor. What means Pharnaces?
Phar. Ask not what I mean,
The new idea floating in my brain
Has yet receiv'd no form. 'Tis yet too soon
To give it body, circumstance, or breath.
The seeds of mighty deeds are lab'ring here,
And struggling for a birth! 'Tis near the hour
The king is wont to summon us to council:
Ere that, this big conception of my mind
I'll shape to form and being. Thou, meanwhile,
Convene our chosen friends: for I shall need
The aid of all your councils, and the weight
of grave authority.
Sor. Who shall be trusted?
Phar. With our immediate motive none, except
A chosen band of friends, who most repine
At Daniel's exaltation.—But the scheme
I meditate must be disclos'd to all
Who bear high office; all our Median rulers,
Princes and captains, presidents and lords;
All must assemble. 'Tis a common cause:
All but the young Araspes: he inclines
To Daniel and his God. He sits attent,
With ravish'd ears, to listen to his lore.
With rev'rence names Jerusalem, and reads
The volume of the law. No more he bows
To hail the golden Ruler of the Day,
But looks for some great Prophet, greater far,
So they pretend, than Mithras! From him therefore,
Conceal whate'er of injury is devis'd
'Gainst Daniel. Be it to thy care to-day
To keep him from the council.
Sor. 'Tis well thought.
'Tis now about the hour of Daniel's prayer.
Araspes too is with him! and to day
They will not sit in council. Haste we then
Designs of high importance, once conceiv'd
Should be accomplish'd! Genius which discerns,
And courage which achieves, despise the aid
Of ling'ring Circumspection! The keen spirit
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought
Start into instant action, and at once
Plans and performs, resolves and executes!

PART II.

Scene—Daniel's house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Araspes. Proceed, proceed, thrice venerable sage,
Enlighten my dark mind with this new ray,
This dawning of salvation! Tell me more
Of this expected King! this Comforter!
This Promise of the nations! this great Hope
Of anxious Israel! This unborn Prophet!
This wonderful, this mighty Counsellor!
This everlasting Lord! this Prince of Peace!
This balm of Gilead, which shall heal the wounds
Of universal nature! this Messiah!
Redeemer, Saviour, Sufferer, Victim, God!
Dan. Enough to animate our faith, we know,
But not enough to soothe the curious pride
Of vain philosophy! Enough to cheer
Our path we see, the rest is hid in clouds;
And heaven's own shadows rest upon the view!
Aras. Go on blest sage! I could for ever hear,
Untir'd, thy admonition! tell me how
I shall obtain the favour of that God
I but begin to know, but fain would serve.
Dan. By deep humility, by faith unfeign'd,
By holy deeds, best proof of living faith!
O Faith,* thou wonder-working principle,
Eternal substance of our present hope,
Thou evidence of things invisible!
What cannot man sustain, sustain'd by thee!
The time would fail, and the bright star of day
Would quench his beams in ocean, and resign
His empire to the silver queen of night;
And she again descend the steep of heaven,
If I should tell what wonders Faith achiev'd
By Gideon, Barak, and the holy seer,
Elkanah's son; the pious Gileadite,
Ill-fated Jephthah! He of Zorah toot
In strength unequall'd; and the shepherd-king
Who vanquish'd Gath's fell giant! Need I tell
Of holy prophets, who by conqu'ring Faith,

* Hebrews, chap. xi. † Samson.

Wrought deeds incredible to mortal sense;
Vanquish'd contending kingdoms, quell'd the rage
Of furious pestilence, extinguish'd fire!
Victorious Faith! others by thee endur'd
Exile, disgrace, captivity, and death!
Some uncomplaining, bore (nor be it deem'd
The meanest exercise of well-try'd Faith)
The cruel mocking, and the bitter taunt,
Foul obloquy, and undeserv'd reproach:
Despising shame, that death to human pride!

Aras. How shall this faith be sought?

Dan. By earnest prayer,
Solicit first the wisdom from above:
Wisdom, whose fruits are purity and peace!
Wisdom! that bright intelligence, which sat
Supreme, when with his golden compasses*
Th' Eternal plann'd the fabric of the world,
Produc'd his fair idea into light,
And said, that all was good! Wisdom, blest beam!
The brightness of the everlasting light!
The spotless mirror of the power of God!
The reflex image of th' all perfect Mind!
A stream translucent, flowing from the source
Of glory infinite! a cloudless light!
Defilement cannot touch nor sin pollute
Her unstain'd purity! Not Ophir's gold,
Nor Ethiopia's gems can match her price!
The ruby of the mine is pale before her!
And, like the oil Elisha's bounty bless'd,
She is a treasure which doth grow by use,
And multiply by spending! She contains,
Within herself the sum of excellence.
If riches are desir'd, wisdom is wealth!
If prudence, where shall keen Invention find
Artificer more cunning? If renown,
In her right hand it comes! If piety,
Are not her labours virtues? If the lore
Which sage Experience teaches, lo! she scans
Antiquity's dark truths; the past she knows,
Anticipates the future; not by arts
Forbidden, of Chaldean sorcerer,
But from the piercing ken of deep Foreknowledge.
From her sure science of the human heart
She weighs effects with causes, ends with means;
Resolving all into the sovereign will.
For earthly blessings moderate be thy pray'r
And qualified; for light, for strength, for grace,
Unbounded thy petition.

Aras. Now, O prophet!
Explain the secret doubts which rack my mind,
And my weak sense confound. Give me some line
To sound the depths of Providence! O say,
Why the ungodly prosper? why their root
Shoots deep, and their thick branches flourish fair,
Like the green bay tree? why the righteous man,
Like tender plants to shiv'ring winds expos'd,
Is strip'd and torn, in naked Virtue bare,
And nipp'd by cruel Sorrow's biting blast?
Explain, O Daniel, these mysterious ways
To my faint apprehension! For as yet
I've much to learn. Fair Truth's immortal sun
Is sometimes hid in clouds; not that her light
Is in itself defective; but obscur'd
By my weak prejudice, imperfect Faith,
And all the thousand causes which obstruct
The growth of goodness.

Dan. Follow me, Araspes.
Within thou shalt peruse the sacred page,
The book of life eternal! *that* will show thee
The end of the ungodly; thou wilt own
How short their longest period; wilt perceive
How black a night succeeds their brightest day!
Thy purged eye will see God is not slack,
As men count slackness, to fulfil his word.
Weigh well this book; and may the Spirit of grace,
Who stamp'd the seal of truth on the bless'd page,
Descend into thy soul, remove thy doubts,
Clear the perplex'd, and solve the intricate,
Till faith be lost in sight, and hope in joy!

* See Paradise Lost, book vii. line 225. Proverbs, chap. viii. ver. 27.

PART III.

DARIUS *on his throne*—PHARNACES, SORANUS, *princes, presidents, and courtiers.*

Pharn. Hail! king Darius, live for ever!

Darius. Welcome!
Welcome my princes, presidents, and friends!
Now tell me, has your wisdom aught devis'd
To aid the commonwealth? In our new empire,
Subdu'd Chaldea, is there aught remains
Your prudence can suggest to serve the state,
To benefit the subject, to redress
And raise the injur'd, to assist the oppress'd,
And humble the oppressor? If you know,
Speak freely, princes! Why am I a king,
Except to poise the awful scale of justice
With even hand; to minister to want;
To bless the nations with a lib'ral rule,
Vicegerant of th' eternal Oromasdes?

Phar. So absolute thy wisdom, mighty king,
All counsel were superfluous.

Darius. Hold, Pharnaces!
No adulation; 'tis the death of virtue;
Who flatters is of all mankind the lowest,
Save he who courts flattery. Kings are men,
As feeble and as frail as those they rule,
And born like them, to die. The Lydian monarch,
Unhappy Crœsus, lately sat aloft,
Almost above mortality; now see him!
Sunk to the vile condition of a slave,
He swells the train of Cyrus! I, like him,
To misery am obnoxious. See this throne;
This royal throne the great Nebassar fill'd;
Yet hence his pride expell'd him! Yonder wall,
The dread terrific writing to the eyes
Of proud Belshazzar show'd; sad monuments
Of Heav'n's tremendous vengeance! and shall I,
Unwarn'd by such examples, cherish pride?
Yet to their dire calamities I owe
The brightest gem that glistens in my crown,
Sage Daniel. If my speech have aught of worth,
Or if my life with aught of good be grac'd,
To him alone I owe it.

Soranus (aside to Pharnaces.) Now Pharnaces,
Will he run o'er and dwell upon his praise,

As if we ne'er had heard it; nay, will swell
The nauseous catalogue with many a virtue
His own fond fancy coins.
Phar. O, great Darius!
Let thine unworthy servant's words find grace,
And meet acceptance in his royal ear,
Who subjugates the east! Let not the king
With anger hear my pray'r.
Darius. Pharnaces, speak;
I know thou lov'st me; I but meant to chide
Thy flatt'ry, not reprove thee for thy zeal.
Speak boldly, friends, as man should speak to man.
Perish the barb'rous maxims of the east,
Which basely would enslave the free-born mind,
And plunder man of the best gift of Heav'n,
His liberty of soul.
Phar. Darius! hear me.
Thy princes, and the captains of thy bands,
Thy presidents, the nobles who bear rule
O'er provinces, and I, thine humble creature.
Less than the least in merit, but in love,
In zeal, and duty, equal with the first,
We have devis'd a measure to confirm
Thy infant empire, to establish firmly
Thy pow'r and new dominion, and secure
Thy growing greatness past the pow'r of change.
Darius. I am prepar'd to hear thee. Speak Pharnaces.
Phar. The wretched Babylonians long have groan'd
Beneath the rule of princes, weak or rash.
The rod of pow'r was sway'd alike amiss,
By feeble Merodach and fierce Belshazzar.
One let the slacken'd reins too loosely float
Upon the people's neck, and lost his pow'r
By nerveless relaxation. He, who follow'd,
Held with a tyrant's hand the cruel curb,
And check'd the groaning nation till it bled;
On different rocks they met one common ruin.
Their edicts were irresolute, their laws
Were feebly plann'd, their counsels ill advis'd;
Now so relax'd, and now so overstrain'd,
That the tir'd people, wearied with the weight
They long have borne, will soon disdain controul,
Tread on all rule, and spurn the hand that guides 'em.
Darius. But say what remedy?
Phar. That too, O king!
Thy servants have provided. Hitherto
They bare the yoke submissive. But to fix
Thy pow'r and their obedience, to reduce
All hearts to thy dominion, yet avoid
Those deeds of cruelty thy nature starts at,
Thou should'st begin by some imperial act
Of absolute dominion, yet unstain'd
By aught of barbarous. For know, O king!
Wholesome severity, if wisely fram'd
With sober discipline, procures more reverence
Than all the lenient counsels and weak measures
Of frail irresolution.
Darius. Now proceed
To thy request.
Phar. Not I, but all request it.
Be thy imperial edict issued straight,
And let a firm decree be this day pass'd,
Irrevocable as our Median laws.
Ordain, that for the space of thirty days
No subject in thy realm shall aught request
Of God or man, except of thee, O king!
Darius. Wherefore this strange decree?
Phar. 'Twill fix the crown
With lasting safety on thy royal brow,
And, by a bloodless means, preserve th' obedience
Of this new empire. Think how much 'twill raise
Thy high renown! 'Twill make thy name revered,
And popular beyond example. What!
To be as Heav'n, dispensing good and ill
For thirty days! With thine own ears to hear
Thy people's wants, with thine own lib'ral hands
To bless thy suppliant subjects! O, Darius!
Thoul't seem as bounteous as a giving God!
And reign in ev'ry heart in Babylon
As well as Media! What a glorious state,
To be the sovereign arbiter of good!
The first efficient cause of happiness!
To scatter mercies with a plenteous hand,
And to be blest thyself in blessing others!
Darius. Is this the gen'ral wish?
[*Princes and courtiers kneel.*
Chief president. Of one, of all.
Behold thy princes, presidents and lords,
Thy counsellors, and captains! See, O king!
[*Presents the edict.*
Behold the instrument our zeal has drawn;
The edict is prepar'd. We only wait
The confirmation of thy gracious word,
And thy imperial signet.
Darius. Say, Pharnaces,
What penalty awaits the man who dares
Transgress our mandate?
Phar. Instant death, O king!
This statute says; 'Should any subject dare
Petition, for the space of thirty days,
Of God or man, except of thee, O king!
He shall be thrown into yon dreadful den
Of hungry lions!'
Darius. Hold! Methinks a deed
Of such importance should be wisely weigh'd.
Phar. We have resolv'd it, mighty king with care,
With closest scrutiny. On us devolve
Whatever blame occurs!
Darius. I'm satisfy'd.
Then to your wisdom I commit me, princes.
Behold the royal signet: see 'tis done.
Phar. (*aside*) There Daniel fell! That signet seal'd his doom.
Darius (*after a pause.*) Let me reflect—Sure I have been too rash!
Why such intemp'rate haste? But you are wise;
And would not counsel this severe decree
But for the wisest purpose. Yet, methinks,
I might have weigh'd, and in my mind resolv'd
This statute, ere, the royal signet stamp'd,
It had been past repeal. Sage Daniel, too!
My counsellor, my guide, my well-try'd friend,
He should have been consulted; he, whose wisdom
I still have found oracular!
Phar. Mighty king!
'Tis as it should be. The decree is past.
Irrevocable, as the steadfast law

Of Mede and Persian, which can never change.
Those who observe it live, as is most meet,
High in thy grace;—who violate it, die.

PART IV.

Scene—DANIEL'S *house.*

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Araspes. Oh, holy Daniel! prophet, father, friend,
I come the wretched messenger of ill!
Thy foes complot thy death. For what can mean
This new-made law, extorted from the king
Almost by force? What can it mean, O Daniel,
But to involve thee in the toils they spread
To snare thy precious life?
Daniel. How! was the king
Consenting to this edict?
Araspes. They surpris'd
His easy nature; took him when his heart
Was soften'd by their blandishments. They wore
The mask of public virtue to deceive him.
Beneath the specious name of general good,
They wrought him to their purposes: no time
Allow'd him to deliberate. One short hour,
Another moment, and his soul had gain'd
Her natural tone of virtue.
Daniel. That great Power
Who suffers evil only to produce
Some unseen good, permits that this should be:
And He permitting, I, well pleas'd resign.
Retire, my friend: this is my second hour
Of daily pray'r. Anon we'll meet again.
Here in the open face of that bright sun
Thy fathers worshipp'd, will I offer up,
As is my rule, petitions to my God,
For thee, for me, for Solyma, for all!
Araspes. Oh, stay! what mean'st thou! sure thou hast not heard
The edict of the king? I thought but now,
Thou knew'st its purport. It expressly says,
That no petition henceforth shall be made,
For thirty days save only to the king;
Nor pray'r nor intercession shall be heard
Of any God or man, but of Darius.
Dan. And think'st thou then my reverence for the king,
Good as he is, shall tempt me to renounce
My sworn allegiance to the King of kings?
Hast thou commanded legions? strove in battle,
Defy'd the face of danger, mock'd at death
In all its frightful forms, and tremblest now?
Come learn of me; I'll teach thee to be bold,
Though sword I never drew! Fear not, Araspes,
The feeble vengeance of a mortal man,
Whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein
Is he to be accounted of? but fear
The awaken'd vengeance of the living Lord
He who can plunge the everlasting soul
In infinite perdition!
Aras. Then, O Daniel!
If thou persist to disobey the edict,
Retire and hide thee from the prying eyes
Of busy malice!
Dan. He who is asham'd
To vindicate the honour of his God,
Of him the living Lord shall be asham'd
When he shall judge the tribes!
Aras. Yet, O remember,
Oft have I heard thee say, the secret heart
Is fair devotion's temple; there the saint,
E'en on that living altar, lights the flame
Of purest sacrifice, which burns unseen,
Not unaccepted.—I remember too,
When Syrian Naaman* by Elisha's hand,
Was cleans'd from foul pollution, and his mind
Enlighten'd by the miracle, confess'd
The Almighty God of Jacob: that he deem'd it
No flagrant violation of his faith
To bend at Rimmon's shrine; nor did the seer
Forbid the rite external.
Dan. Know, Araspes,
Heav'n designs to suit our trials to our strength;
A recent convert, feeble in his faith:
Naaman, perhaps, had sunk beneath the weight
Of so severe a duty. Gracious Heav'n
Forbears to bruise the reed, or quench the flax
When feeble and expiring. But shall I,
Shall Daniel, shall the servant of the Lord,
A vet'ran in his cause—long train'd to know
And do his will—long exercis'd in wo,
Bred in captivity and born to suffer;
Shall I, from known, from certain duty shrink
To shun a threaten'd danger? O, Araspes!
Shall I, advanc'd in age, in zeal decline?
Grow careless as I reach my journey's end
And slacken in my pace, the goal in view?
Perish discretion, when it interferes
With duty! Perish the false policy
Of human wit, which would commute our safety
With God's eternal honour! Shall His law
Be set at nought, that I may live at ease?
How would the Heathen triumph, should I fall
Through coward fear! How would God's enemies
Insultingly blaspheme!
Aras. Yet think a moment.
Dan. No!—
Where evil may be *done*, 'tis right to ponder;
Where only *suffer'd* know the shortest pause
Is much too long. Had great Darius paus'd,
This ill had been prevented. But for me,
Araspes, to deliberate is to sin.
Aras. Think of thy pow'r, thy favour with Darius:
Think of thy life's importance to the tribes,
Scarce yet return'd in safety. Live! O, live!
To serve the cause of God!
Dan. God will himself
Sustain his righteous cause. He knows to raise
Fit instruments to serve him. Know, Araspes,
He does not need our crimes to help his cause,
Nor does his equitable law permit
A sinful act, from the prepost'rous plea
That good may follow it. For me, my friend,
The spacious earth holds not a bait to tempt
What would it profit me, if I should gain
Imperial Ecbatan, th' extended land
Of fruitful Media, nay, the world's wide empire,
If mine eternal soul must be the price?
Farewell, my friend! time presses. I have stol'n
Some moments from my duty to confirm

* Kings. chap v.

And strengthen thy young faith! Let us fulfil
What Heav'n enjoins, and leave to Heav'n th' event!

PART V.

Scene—The Palace.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

Phar. 'Tis done—success has crown'd our scheme, Soranus;
And Daniel falls into the deep-laid toils
Our prudence spread.
Sor. That he should fall so soon,
Astonishes e'en me! what! not a day!
What! not a single moment to defer
His rash devotions? Madly thus to rush
On certain peril quite transcends belief!
When happen'd it, Pharnaces?
Phar. On the instant:
Scarce is the deed accomplish'd. As he made
His ostentatious pray'r, e'en in the face
Of the bright God of day, all Babylon
Beheld the insult offer'd to Darius.
For, as in bold defiance of the law,
His windows were not clos'd. Our chosen bands,
Whom we had plac'd to note him, straight rush'd in,
And seiz'd him in the warmth of his blind zeal,
Ere half his pray'r was finish'd. Young Araspes,
With all the wild extravagance of grief,
Prays, weeps, and threatens. Daniel silent stands,
With patient resignation, and prepares
To follow them.—But see, the king approaches!
Sor. How 's this? deep sorrow sits upon his brow,
And stern resentment fires his angry eye!

Enter DARIUS.

Dar. O, deep-laid stratagem! O, artful wile!
To take me unprepar'd, to wound my heart,
E'en where it feels most tenderly, in friendship!
To stab my fame! to hold me up a mark
To future ages, for the perjur'd prince
Who slew the friend he lov'd! O Daniel, Daniel,
Who now shall trust Darius? Not a slave
In my wide empire, from the Indian main
To the cold Caspian, but is more at ease
Than I, his monarch! Yes! I 've done a deed
Will blot my honour with eternal stain!
Pharnaces! O, thou hoary sycophant!
Thou wily politician! thou hast snar'd
Thy unsuspecting master!
Phar. Great Darius,
Let not resentment blind thy royal eyes.
In what am I to blame? who could suspect
This obstinate resistance to the law?
Who could foresee that Daniel would perforce
Oppose the king's decree?
Dar. Thou, thou foresaw'st it!
Thou know'st his righteous soul would ne'er endure
So long an interval of pray'r. But I,
Deluded king! 'twas I should have foreseen
His steadfast piety. I should have thought
Your earnest warmth had some more secret source,
Something that touch'd you nearer than your love,
Your well-feign'd zeal for me.—I should have known
When selfish politicians, hackney'd long
In fraud and artifice, affect a glow
Of patriot fervour, or fond loyalty,
Which scorns all show of interest, that's the moment
To watch their crooked projects.—Well thou know'st
How dear I held him; how I priz'd his truth
Did I not choose him from a subject world,
Unbless'd by fortune, and by birth ungrac'd,
A captive and a Jew? Did I not love him?
Was he not rich in independent worth?
And great in native goodness? That undid him!
There, there he fell! If he had been less great,
He had been safe. Thou could'st not bear his brightness;
The lustre of his virtues quite obscur'd,
And dimm'd thy fainter merit. Rash old man!
Go, and devise some means to set me free
From this dread load of guilt! Go set at work
Thy plotting genius to redeem the life
Of venerable Daniel!
Phar. 'Tis too late.
He has offended 'gainst the new decree;
Has dar'd to make petition to his God,
Although the dreadful sentence of the act
Full well he knew. And by th' established law
Of Media, by that irrevocable,
Which he has dar'd to violate, he dies!
Dar. Impiety! presumption! monstrous law!
Irrevocable? Is there aught on earth
Deserves that name? Th' eternal laws alone
Of Oromasdes are unchangeable!
All human projects are so faintly fram'd,
So feebly plann'd, so liable to change,
So mix'd with error in their very form,
That mutable and mortal are the same.
But where is Daniel! Wherefore comes he not
To load me with reproaches? to upbraid me
With all the wrongs my barbarous haste has done him!
Where is he?
Phar. He prepares to meet his fate.
This hour he dies, for the act so decrees.
Dar. Suspend the bloody sentence. Bring him hither.
Or rather let me seek him and implore
His dying pardon, and his parting pray'r.

PART VI.

Scene—Daniel's house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Ara. STILL let me follow thee; still let me hear
The voice of Wisdom, ere the silver cord
By death's cold hand be loosen'd.
Dan. Now I'm ready!
No grief, no woman's weakness, good Araspes;
Thou should'st rejoice my pilgrimage is o'er,
And the blest heaven of repose in view.
Ara. And must I loose thee, Daniel? must thou die?

Dan. And what is death, my friend, that I should fear it?
To die! why 'tis to triumph; 'tis to join
The great assembly of the good and just;
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints!
Oh! 'tis to join the band of holy men,
Made perfect by their sufferings! 'Tis to meet
My great progenitors! 'Tis to behold
Th' illustrious patriarchs; they with whom the Lord
Deign'd hold familiar converse. 'Tis to see
Bless'd Noah and his children, once a world!
'Tis to behold, oh, rapture to conceive!
Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost below!
Bold Azariah, and the band of brothers,
Who sought, in bloom of youth, the scorching flames!
Nor shall we see heroic men alone,
Champions who fought the fight of faith on earth;
But heavenly conquerors, angelic hosts,
Michael and his bright legions, who subdu'd
The foes of truth! To join their blest employ
Of love and praise! to the high melodies
Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,
Accordant to the golden harps of saints!
To join in blest hosannahs to their king!
Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,
Alone were heaven, though saint or seraph none
Should meet our sight, and only God were there!
This is to die! Who would not die for this?
Who would not die, that he might live for ever?

DARIUS, DANIEL, ARASPES.

Dar. Where is he? where is Daniel?—Let me see him!
Let me embrace that venerable form,
Which I have doom'd to glut the greedy maw
Of furious lions!
Dan. King Darius, hail!
Dar. O, injur'd Daniel, can I see thee thus!
Thus uncomplaining! can I bear to hear
That when the ruffian ministers of death
Stopp'd thy unfinish'd pray'r, thy pious lips
Had just invok'd a blessing on Darius,
On him who sought thy life? Thy murd'rers drop
Tears of strange pity. Look not on me thus
With mild benignity! Oh! I could bear
The voice of keen reproach, or the strong flash
Of fierce resentment; but I cannot stand
That touching silence, nor that patient eye
Of meek respect.
Dan. Thou art my master still.
Dar. I am thy murderer! I have sign'd thy death!
Dan. I know thy bent of soul is honourable:
Thou hast been gracious still! Were it not so,
I would have met the appointment of high Heaven
With humble acquiescence; but to know
Thy will concurr'd not with thy servant's fate,
Adds joy to resignation.
Dar. Here I swear
By him who sits enthron'd in yon bright sun,
Thy blood shall be aton'd! On these thy foes,
Thou shalt have ample vengeance.
Dan. Hold, O king!
Vengeance is mine, th' eternal Lord hath said;
Myself will recompense with even hand,
The sinner for the sin. The wrath of man
Works not the righteousness of God!
Dar. I had hop'd
We should have trod this busy stage together
A little longer, then have sunk to rest
In honourable age! Who now shall guide
My shatter'd bark in safety? who shall now
Direct me? O, unhappy state of kings!
'Tis well the robe of majesty is gay,
Or who would put it on? A crown! what is it?
It is to bear the miseries of a people!
To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,
And sink beneath a load of splendid care!
To have your best success ascrib'd to Fortune,
And Fortune's failures all ascrib'd to you!
It is to sit upon a joyless height,
To every blast of changing fate expos'd!
Too high for hope! too great for happiness!
For friendship too much fear'd! To all the joys
Of social freedom, and th' endearing charm
Of lib'ral interchange of soul unknown!
Fate meant me an exception to the rest,
And though a monarch, bless'd me with a friend;
And I—have murder'd him!
Dan. My hour approaches
Hate not my mem'ry, king: protect Araspes:
Encourage Cyrus in the holy work
Of building ruin'd Solyma. Farewell!
Dar. With most religious strictness I 'll fulfil
Thy last request. Araspes shall be next
My throne and heart. Farewell!
[*They embrace.*
Hear, future kings!
Ye unborn rulers of the nation, hear!
Learn from my crime, from my misfortune learn,
Never to trust to weak or wicked hands,
That delegated pow'r which Oromasdes
Invests in monarchs for the public good.

PART VII.

Scene—The court of the palace.—The sun rising

DARIUS, ARASPES.

Dar. Oh, good Araspes! what a night of horror!
To me the dawning day brings no return
Of cheerfulness or peace! No balmy sleep
Has seal'd these eyes, no nourishment has past
These loathing lips, since Daniel's fate was sign'd!
Hear what my fruitless penitence resolves—
That thirty days my rashness had decreed
The edict's force should last, I will devote
To mourning and repentance, fasting, pray'r
And all due rites of grief. For thirty days
No pleasant sound of dulcimer or harp,
Sackbut or flute, or psaltery, shall charm
My ear, now dead to ev'ry note of joy!
Aras. My grief can know no period!
Dar. See that den!
There Daniel met the furious lion's rage!
There were the patient martyr's mangled limbs
Torn piece-meal! Never hide thy tears, Araspes;
'Tis virtuous sorrow, unalloy'd, like mine,
By guilt and fell remorse! Let us approach:

Who knows but that dread Pow'r to whom he pray'd
So often and so fervently, has heard him!
[*He goes to the mouth of the den.*
O Daniel, servant of the living God!
He whom thou hast serv'd so long, and lov'd so well,
From the devouring lions' famish'd jaws,
Can he deliver thee?
Dan. (*from the bottom of the den.*) He can—he has!
Dar. Methought I heard him speak!
Aras. O, wond'rous force
Of strong imagination! were thy voice
Loud as the trumpet's blast, it could not wake him
From that eternal sleep!
Dan. (*in the den.*) Hail, king Darius!
The God I serve has shut the lions' mouths,
To vindicate my innocence.
Dar. He speaks!
He lives!
Aras. 'Tis no illusion: 'tis the sound
Of his known voice.
Dar. Where are my servants? Haste,
Fly, swift as lightning, free him from the den;
Release him, bring him hither! break the seal
Which keeps him from me! See, Araspes! look!
See the charm'd lions!—Mark their mild demeanor:
Araspes, mark!—they have no pow'r to hurt him!
See how they hang their heads and smooth their fiereeness
At his mild aspect!
Aras. Who that sees this sight,
Who that in after times shall hear this told,
Can doubt if Daniel's God be God indeed?
Dar. None, none, Araspes!
Aras. Ah, he comes, he comes!

Enter DANIEL, *followed by multitudes.*

Dan. Hail, great Darius!
Dar. Dost thou live indeed!
And live unhurt?
Aras. O, miracle of joy!
Dar. I scarce can trust my eyes! How didst thou 'scape?
Dan. That bright and glorious Being, who vouchsaf'd
Presence divine, when the three martyr'd brothers
Essay'd the caldron's flame, supported me!
E'en in the furious lions' dreadful den,
The prisoner of hope, even there I turn'd
To the strong hold, the bulwark of my strength,
Ready to hear, and mighty to redeem!
Dar. (*to Aras.*) Where is Pharnaces? Take the hoary traitor!
Take too Soranus, and the chief abettors
Of this dire ediet: let not one escape.
The punishment their deep-laid hate devis'd
For holy Daniel, on their heads shall fall
With tenfold vengeance. To the lion's den
I doom his vile accusers! All their wives,
Their children too, shall share one common fate!
Take care that none escape—Go, good Araspes.
[*Araspes goes out.*
Dan. Not so, Darius!
O spare the guiltless; spare the guilty too!
Where sin is not, to punish were unjust;
And where sin is, O king, there fell remorse
Supplies the place of punishment!
Dar. No more!
My word is past! Not one request, save this,
Shalt thou e'er make in vain. Approach, my friends;
Araspes has already spread the tale,
And see what crowds advance!
Peo. Long live Darius!
Long live great Daniel too, the people's friend!
Dar. Draw near, my subjects. See this holy man! [band
Death had no pow'r to harm him. Yon fell
Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,
Forgot their nature, and grew tame before him.
The mighty God protects his servants thus!
The righteous thus he rescues from the snare,
While Fraud's artificer himself shall fall
In the deep gulf his wily arts devise
To snare the innocent!
A courtier. To the same den
Araspes bears Pharnaces and his friends:
Fallen is their insolence! With prayers and tears
And all the meanness of high-crested pride,
When adverse fortune frowns, they beg for life.
Araspes will not hear. 'You heard not me,'
He cries, 'When I for Daniel's life implor'd;
His God protected him! see now if your's
Will listen to your cries!'
Dar. Now hear,
People and nations, languages and realms,
O'er whom I rule! Peace be within your walls!
That I may banish from the minds of men
The rash decree gone out; hear me resolve
To counteract its force by one more just.
In ev'ry kingdom of my wide-stretch'd realm
From fair Chaldea to the extremest bound
Of northern Media, be my ediet sent,
And this my statute known. My heralds haste,
And spread my royal mandate through the land,
That all my subjects bow the ready knee
To Daniel's GOD—for HE alone is LORD.
Let all adore, and tremble at HIS name,
Who sits in glory unapproachable
Above the heavens—above the heaven of heavens!
HIS pow'r is everlasting; and HIS throne,
Founded in equity and truth, shall last
Beyond the bounded reign of time and space
Through wide eternity! With HIS right arm
HE saves, and who opposes? HE defends,
And who shall injure? In the perilous den
HE rescu'd Daniel from the lions' mouths;
HIS common deeds are wonders; all HIS works
One ever-during chain of miracles!

Enter ARASPES.

Aras. All hail, O king! Darius, live for ever!
May all thy foes be as Pharnaces is!
Dar. Araspes, speak!
Aras. O, let me spare the tale!—
'Tis full of horror! Dreadful was the sight!
The hungry lions, greedy for their prey,
Devour'd the wretched princes ere they reach'd
The bottom of the den.
Dar. Now, now confess
'Twas some superior hand restrain'd their rage,
And tam'd their furious appetites.
People. 'Tis true.

The God of Daniel is a mighty God!
He saves and He destroys.
Aras. O, friend! O, Daniel!
No wav'ring doubts can ever more disturb
My settled faith.
Dan. To God be all the glory!

REFLECTIONS OF KING HEZEKIAH

IN HIS SICKNESS.

'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.'—*Isaiah*, xxxviii.

What, and no more?—Is this my soul, said I,
My whole of being! Must I surely die?
Be robb'd at once of health, of strength, of time,
Of youth's fair promise, and of pleasure's prime?
Shall I no more behold the face of morn,
The cheerful daylight, and the spring's return?
Must I the festive pow'r the banquet leave,
For the dull chambers of the darksome grave!
Have I consider'd what it is to die?
In native dust with kindred worms to lie;
To sleep in cheerless, cold neglect! to rot!
My body loath'd, my very name forgot!
Not one of all those parasites, who bend
The supple knee, their monarch to attend!
What, not one friend! No, not an hireling slave
Shall hail great Hezekiah in the grave.
Where 's he who falsely claim'd the name of *great*?
Whose eye was terror, and whose frown was fate?
Who aw'd an hundred nations from the throne?
See where he lies, dumb, friendless, and alone!
Which grain of dust proclaims the noble birth?
Which is the royal particle of earth?
Where are the marks, the princely ensigns where?
Which is the slave, and which great David's heir?
Alas! the beggar's ashes are not known
From his who lately sat on Israel's throne!
How stands my great account? My soul survey
The debt Eternal Justice bids thee pay!
Should I frail Memory's records strive to blot,
Will Heaven's tremendous reck'ning be forgot?
Can I, alas! the awful volume tear?
Or raze one page of the dread register?
'*Prepare thy house, thy heart in order set;*
Prepare the Judge of Heaven and earth to meet.'
So spake the warning prophet.—Awful words!
Which fearfully my troubled soul record.
Am I prepar'd? and *can* I meet my doom,
Nor shudder at the dreaded wrath to come?
Is all in order set, my house, my heart?
Does not besetting sin still claim a part?
No cherish'd error, loth to quit its place,
Obstruct within my soul the work of grace?
Did I each day for this great day prepare,
By righteous deeds, by sin-subduing pray'r?
Did I each night, each day's offence repent,
And each unholy thought and word lament?
Still have these ready hands th' afflicted fed,
And minister'd to Want her daily bread?
The cause I knew not, did I well explore?
Friend, advocate, and parent of the poor?
Did I to gratify some sudden gust
Of thoughtless appetite, some impious lust
Of pleasure or of pow'r, such sums employ
As would have flush'd pale penury with joy?
Did I in groves forbidden altars raise,
Or molten gods adore, or idols praise
Did my firm faith to Heaven still point the way?
Did charity to man my actions sway?
Did meek-ey'd Patience all my steps attend?
Did gen'rous Candour mark me for her friend?
Did I unjustly seek to build my name
On the pil'd ruins of another's fame?
Did I abhor, as hell, the insidious lie,
The low deceit, the unmanly calumny?
Did my fix'd soul the impious wit detest?
Did my firm virtue scorn th' unhallow'd jest?
The sneer profane, and the good ridicule
Of shallow Infidelity's dull school?
Did I still live as born one day to die,
And view th eternal world with constant eye?
If so I liv'd, if so I kept thy word,
In mercy view, in mercy hear me, Lord!
For oh! how strict soe'er I kept thy law,
From mercy only all my hopes I draw!
My holiest deeds *indulgence* will require;
The best but to *forgiveness* will aspire;
If thou my purest services regard,
'Twill be with pardon only, not reward!
How imperfection 's stamp'd on all below!
How sin intrudes in all we say or do!
How late in all the insolence of health,
I charm'd th' Assyrian* by my boast of wealth!
How fondly with elab'rate pomp display'd
My glitt'ring treasures! with what triumph laid
My gold and gems before his dazzled eyes,
And found a rich reward in his surprise?
O, mean of soul! can wealth elate the heart,
Which of the man himself is not a part!
O, poverty of pride! O, foul disgrace!
Disgusted Reason, blushing hides her face
Mortal and proud! strange contradicting terms!
Pride for death's victim, for the prey of worms!
Of all the wonders which th' eventful life
Of man presents! of all the mental strife
Of warring passions; all the raging fires
Of furious appetites and mad desires,
Not one so strange appears as this alone,
That man is proud of what is not his own!
How short is human life! the very breath!
Which frames my words, accelerates my death.
Of this short life how large a portion 's fled!
To what is gone I am already dead;
As dead to all my years and minutes past,
As I, to what remains, shall be at last.
Can I past miseries so far forget,
To view my vanish'd years with fond regret?

* This is an anachronism. Hezekiah did not show his treasures to the Assyrian till after his recovery from his sickness.

Can I again my worn-out fancy cheat?
Indulge fresh hope? solicit new deceit?
Of all the vanities weak man admires,
Which greatness gives, youth hopes, or pride desires,
Of these, my soul, which hast thou not enjoy'd?
With each, with all, thy sated pow'rs are cloy'd.
What can I then expect from length of days?
More wealth, more wisdom, pleasure, health, or praise?
More pleasure! hope not that, deluded king!
For when did age increase of pleasure bring?
Is health, of years prolong'd the common boast?
And dear-earn'd Fame, is it not cheaply lost?
More wisdom! that indeed were happiness;
That were a wish a king might well confess;
But when did Wisdom covet length of days?
Or seek its bliss in pleasures, wealth, or praise?
No:—Wisdom views with an indifferent eye
All finite joys, all blessings born to die.
The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
Compell'd to starve at an unreal feast;
A spark, which upward tends by nature's force;
A stream diverted from its parent source;
A drop, dissever'd from the boundless sea;
A moment parted from eternity:
A pilgrim panting for the rest to come;
An exile, anxious for his native home.
Why should I ask my forfeit life to save?
Is heaven unjust, which dooms me to the grave?
Was I with hope of endless days deceiv'd?
Or of lov'd life am I alone bereav'd?
Let all the great, the rich, the learn'd, the wise,
Let all the shades of Judah's monarchs rise,
And say, if genius, learning, empire, wealth,
Youth, beauty, virtue, strength, renown or health,
Has once revers'd th' immutable decree
On Adam pass'd of man's mortality?
What have these eyes ne'er seen the felon worm
The damask cheek devour, the finish'd form?
On the pale rose of blasted beauty feed,
And riot on the lip so lately red?
Where are our fathers? Where th' illustrious line
Of holy prophets, and of seers divine?
Live they for ever? Do they shun the grave?
Or when did Wisdom its professor save?
When did the brave escape? When did the breath
Of Eloquence charm the dull ear of Death?
When did the cunning argument avail,
The polish'd period, or the varnish'd tale;
The eye of lightning, or the soul of fire,
Which thronging thousands crowded to admire?
E'en while we praise the verse the poet dies;
And silent as his lyre great David lies.
Thou, blest Isaiah! who at God's command,
Now speak'st repentance to a guilty land,
Must die! as wise and good thou hadst not been,
As Nebat's son, who taught the land to sin!
And shall I then be spar'd? O monstrous pride!
Shall I escape when Solomon has died?
If all the worth of all the saints were vain—
Peace, peace, my troubled soul, nor dare complain!
Lord, I submit. Complete thy gracious will!
For if thou slay me, I will trust Thee still.
O be my will so swallow'd up in thine,
That I may do THY will in doing *mine*.

THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS:

A PASTORAL DRAMA FOR YOUNG LADIES.

——To rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enliv'ning spirit, and to fix
The gen'rous purpose of the female breast.—*Thomson.*

TO MRS. GWATKIN.

DEAR MADAM,—As the following poem turns chiefly on the danger of delay or error in the important article of education, I know not to whom I can, with more propriety, dedicate it than to you, as the subject it inculcates has been one of the principal objects of your attention in your own family.

Let not the name of dedication alarm you: I am not going to offend you by making your eulogium. Panegyric is only necessary to suspicious characters: Virtue will not accept it; Delicacy will not offer it.

The friendship with which you have honoured me from my childhood, will, I flatter myself, induce you to pardon me for venturing to lay before you this public testimony of my esteem, and to assure you how much I am, dear madam,

Your obedient, and obliged humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE object of the following poem, which was written in very early youth, was an earnest wish to furnish a substitute for the improper custom, which then prevailed, of allowing plays, and

those not always of the purest kind, to be acted by young ladies in boarding schools. And it has afforded a serious satisfaction to the author to learn that this little poem, and the preceding sacred dramas, have very frequently been adopted to supply the place of those more dangerous amusements. If it may be still happily instrumental in promoting a regard to Religion and Virtue in the minds of young persons, and afford them an innocent, and perhaps not altogether unuseful, amusement, in the exercise of recitation, the end for which it was originally composed, and the author's utmost wish in its republication, will be fully answered.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY A YOUNG LADY.

In these grave scenes, and unembellish'd strains,
Where neither sly intrigue nor passion reigns;
How dare we hope an audience will approve
A drama void of wit and free from love?
Where no soft Juliet sighs, and weeps, and starts,
No fierce Roxana takes by storm your hearts;
No comic ridicule, no tragic swagger,
Not one elopement, not one bowl or dagger!
No husband wrong'd, who trusted and believ'd,
No father cheated, and no friend deceiv'd;
No libertine in glowing strains describ'd,
No lying chambermaid that rake had brib'd:
Nor give we, to reward the rover's life,
The ample portion and the beauteous wife;
Behold, to raise the manners of the age,
The frequent moral of the scenic page!
And shall we then transplant these noxious scenes
To private life? to misses in their teens?
The pompous tone, the masculine attire,
The stilts, the buskin, the dramatic fire,
Corrupt the softness of the gentler kind,
And taint the sweetness of the youthful mind.
Ungovern'd passions, jealousy and rage,
But ill become our sex, still less our age;
Whether we learn *too well* what we describe,
Or *fail* the poet's meaning to imbibe,
In either case your blame we justly raise,
In either lose, or ought to lose, your praise.
How dull, if tamely flows th' impassion'd strain!
If well—how bad to be the thing we feign;
To fix the mimic scene upon the heart,
And keep the passion when we quit the part!
Such are the perils the dramatic muse,
In youthful bosoms, threatens to infuse!
Our timid author labours to impart
A less pernicious lesson to the heart;
What though no charm of melody divine,
Smooth her round period, or adorn her line;
Though her unpolish'd page in vain aspires
To emulate the graces she admires:
Though destitute of skill, her sole pretence
But aims at simple truth and common sense;
Yet shall her honest unassuming page
Tell that its author, in a modish age,
Preferr'd plain virtue to the boast of art,
Nor fix'd one dangerous maxim on the heart.
O if, to crown the efforts, she could find
They rooted but one error from one mind:
If in the bosom of ingenuous youth
They stamp'd one useful thought, one lasting truth;
'Twould be a fairer tribute to her name,
Than loud applauses, or an empty fame.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA, four young ladies of distinction, in search of Happiness.

URANIA, an ancient shepherdess.

SYLVIA, ELIZA, her daughters.

FLORELLA, a young shepherdess.

Scene—A Grove.

EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA.

Cle. WELCOME, ye humble vales, ye flow'ry shades,
Ye crystal fountains, and ye silent glades!
From the gay misery of the thoughtless great,
The walks of folly, the disease of state;
From scenes where daring Guilt triumphant reigns,
Its dark suspicions and its hoard of pains;
Where Pleasure never comes without alloy,
And Art but thinly paints fallacious joy;
Where Laughter loads the day, Excess the night,
And dull Satiety succeeds Delight;
Where midnight Vices their fell orgies keep,
And guilty revels scare the phantom Sleep;
Where Dissipation wears the name of Bliss;
From these we fly in search of Happiness.

Euph. Not the tir'd pilgrim all his dangers past,
When he descries the long sought shrine at last,
E'er felt a joy so pure as this fair field,
These peaceful shades, and smiling vallies yield!
For, sure, these oaks, which old as Time appear,
Proclaim Urania's lonely dwelling near.

Past. How the description with the scene agrees!
Here lowly thickets, there aspiring trees;
The hazel copse excluding noon-day's beam,
The tufted arbor, the pellucid stream;
The blooming sweet-briar, and the hawthorn shade,

The springing cowslips, and the daisy'd mead,
The wild luxuriance of the full blown fields,
Which Spring prepares, and laughing Summer yields.
Euph. Here simple Nature strikes th' enraptur'd eye
With charms, which wealth and art but ill supply;
The genuine graces, which *without* we find,
Display the beauty of the owner's *mind.*
Lau. These embow'ring shades conceal the cell,
Where sage Urania and her daughters dwell:
Florella too, if right we've heard the tale,
With them resides—the lily of the vale.
Cle. But soft! what gentle female form appears,
Which smiles of more than mortal beauty wears?
Is it the guardian Genius of the grove?
Or some fair angel of the choirs above?

Enter FLORELLA, *who speaks.*

Whom do I see? ye beauteous virgins say
What chance conducts your steps this lonely way?
Do you pursue some favourite lambkin stray'd?
Or do yon alders court you to their shade?
Declare, fair strangers! if aright I deem,
No rustic nymphs of vulgar rank you seem.
Cle. No cooling shades allure our eager sight,
Nor lambkins lost, our searching steps invite.
Flo. Or is it, hap'ly, yonder branching vine,
Whose tendrils round our low roof cottage twine;
Whose spreading height, with purple clusters crown'd,
Attracts the gaze of ev'ry nymph around?
Have these lone regions aught that charms beside?
Yours are my shades, my flow'rs, my fleecy pride.
Euph. Florella! our united thanks receive,
Sole proof of gratitude we have to give:
And since you deign to ask, O courteous fair!
The motive of our unremitting care:
Know then, kind maid, our joint researches tend
To find that sovereign good of life, a friend;
From whom the wholesome counsel we may gain,
How our young hearts may happiness obtain.
By Fancy's mimic pencil oft portray'd,
Still have we woo'd the visionary maid:
The lovely phantom mocks our eager eyes;
And still we chase, and still we miss the prize!
Cle. Long have we search'd throughout this bounteous isle,
With constant ardour and with ceaseless toil;
The various ways of various life we've try'd;
But still the bliss we seek has been deny'd.
We've sought in vain through ev'ry diff'rent state;
The murm'ring poor, the discontented great.
If Peace and Joy in palaces reside,
Or in obscurer haunts delight to hide;
If Happiness with worldly pleasures dwell,
Or shrouds her graces in the hermit's cell:
If Wit, if Science, teach the road to bliss,
Or torpid Dulness find the joys *they* miss;
To learn this truth, we've bid a long adieu
To all the shadows blinded men pursue.
—We seek Urania; whose sagacious mind
May lead our steps this latent good to find:
Her worth we emulate; her virtues fire
Our ardent hearts to *be* what we admire:
For though with care she shuns the public eye
Yet worth like *hers*, unknown can never lie.
Lau. On such a fair and faultless mode form'd,
By Prudence guided, and by Virtue warm'd,
Perhaps Florella can direct our youth,
And point our footsteps to the paths of Truth.
Flor. Ill would it suit my unexperienc'd age,
In such important questions to engage.
Young as I am, unskilful to discern,
Nor fit to teach, who yet have much to learn,
But would you with maturer years advise,
And reap the counsel of the truly wise,
The dame in whom such worth and wisdom meet,
Dwells in the covert of yon green retreat:
All that the world calls great she once possess'd,
With wealth, with rank, her prosp'rous youth was bless'd.
In adverse fortune, now serene and gay,
'Who gave,' she said, 'had right to take away.
Two lovely daughters bless her growing years,
And by their virtues, well repay her cares.
With them, beneath her shelt'ring wing I live,
And share the bounties she has still to give;
For Heav'n, who in its dispensations join'd
A narrow fortune to a noble mind,
Has bless'd the sage Urania with a heart
Which Wisdom's noblest treasures can impart
In Duty's active round each day is past,
As if she thought each day might prove her last:
Her labours for devotion best prepare,
And meek Devotion smooths the brow of care.
Past. Then lead, Florella, to that humble shed,
Where Peace resides from court and cities fled!

SONG.

I.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care,
O hear our fond request!
Vouchsafe, reluctant Nymph to tell
On what sweet spot thou lov'st to dwell,
And make us truly blest.

II.

Amidst the walks of public life,
The toils of wealth, ambition's strife,
We long have sought in vain;
The crowded city's noisy din,
And all the busy haunts of men,
Afford but care and pain.

III.

Pleas'd with the soft, the soothing pow'r
Of calm Reflection's silent hour,
Sequester'd dost thou dwell!
Where Care and Tumult ne'er intrude,
Dost thou reside with Solitude,
Thy humble vot'ries tell!

IV.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care!
Let us not sue in vain!

Deign to hear our fond request,
Come take possession of our breast,
And there for ever reign.

[*They retire.*

Scene—The Grove.

URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

SYLVIA (*singing.*)

I.

Sweet Sotitude, thou placid queen
Of modest air and brow serene!
'Tis thou inspir'st the sage's themes;
The poet's visionary dreams.

II.

Parent of Virtue, nurse of Thought!
By thee were saints and patriarchs taught;
Wisdom from thee her treasure drew,
And in thy lap fair Science grew!

III.

Whate'er exalts, refines, and charms,
Invites to thought, to virtue warms;
Whate'er is perfect, fair, and good,
We owe to thee, sweet Solitude!

IV.

In these blest shades, O still maintain
Thy peaceful, unmolested reign!
Let no disorder'd thoughts intrude
On thy repose, sweet Solitude!

V.

With thee the charm of life shall last,
Although its rosy bloom be past;
Shall still endure when Time shall spread
His silver blossoms o'er my head.

VI.

No more with this vain world perplex'd,
Thou shalt prepare me for the next;
The springs of life shall gently cease,
And angels point the way to peace.

Ura. Ye tender objects of maternal love
Ye dearest joys my widow'd heart can prove;
Come taste the glories of the new-born day,
And grateful homage to its Author pay!
O! ever may this animating sight
Convey instruction while it sheds delight!
Does not that sun, whose cheering beams impart
Joy's glad emotions to the pure in heart;
Does not that vivid pow'r teach ev'ry mind
To be as warm, benevolent, and kind;
To burn with unremitted ardour still,
Like him to execute their Maker's will?
Then let us, Pow'r Supreme! thy will adore,
Invoke thy mercies, and proclaim thy pow'r.
Shalt thou these benefits in vain bestow?
Shall we forget the fountain whence they flow?
Teach us through these to lift our hearts to Thee,
And in the gift the bounteous giver see.
To view Thee as thou art, all good and wise,
Nor let thy blessings hide Thee from our eyes.
From all obstructions clear our mental sight;
Pour on our souls thy beatific light!
Teach us thy wond'rous goodness to revere,
With love to worship, and with rev'rence fear!
In the mild works of thy benignant hand,
As in the thunder of thy dread command.
In common objects we neglect thy pow'r,
While wonders shine in every plant and flow'r.
—Tell me, my first, my last, my darling care,
If you this morn have rais'd your hearts in pray'r?
Say did you rise from the sweet bed of rest,
Your God unprais'd, his holy name unblest?

Syl. Our hearts with gratitude and reverence fraught,
By those pure precepts you have ever taught;
By your example more than precept strong
Of pray'r and praise have tun'd their matin song.

Eliz. With ever new delight, we now attend
The counsels of our fond maternal friend.

Enter FLORELLA, *with* EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA.

Flo. (*aside to the ladies*) See how the goodly dame, with pious art,
Makes each event a lesson to the heart!
Observe the duteous list'ners how they stand:
Improvement and delight go hand in hand.

Ura. But where's Florella?

Flor. Here's the happy she,
Whom Heav'n most favour'd when it gave her thee.

Ura. But who are these, in whose attractive mien,
So sweetly blended, ev'ry grace is seen
Speak, my Florella! say the cause why here
These beauteous damsels on our plains appear?

Flor. Invited hither by Urania's fame,
To seek her friendship, to these shades they came.
Straying alone at morning's earliest dawn,
I met them wand'ring on the distant lawn.
Their courteous manners soon engag'd my love:
I've brought them here your sage advice to prove.

Ura. Tell me, ye gentle nymphs! the reason tell,
Which brings such guests to grace my lowly cell?
My pow'r of serving, though indeed but small,
Such as it is, you may command it all.

Cle. Your counsel, your advice, is all we ask,
And for Urania that 's no irksome task.
'Tis Happiness we seek: O deign to tell
Where the coy fugitive delights to dwell!

Ura. Ah, rather say where you have sought this guest,
This lovely inmate of the virtuous breast?
Declare the various methods you've essay'd
To court and win the bright celestial maid.
But first, though harsh the task, each beauteous fair
Her ruling passion must with truth declare,
From evil habits own'd, from faults confess'd,
Alone we trace the secrets of the breast.

Euph. Bred in the regal splendours of a court,
Where pleasures, dress'd in every shape, resort,
I try'd the pow'r of pomp and costly glare,
Nor e'er found room for thought, or time for pray'r:
In diff'rent follies ev'ry hour I spent;
I shunn'd Reflection, yet I sought Content.
My hours were shar'd betwixt the park and play,
And music serv'd to waste the tedious day;
Yet softest airs no more with joy I heard,
If any sweeter warbler was preferr'd;
The dance succeeded, and, succeeding, tir'd,
If some more graceful dancer were admir'd.
No sounds but flatt'ry ever sooth'd my ear:

Ungentle truths I knew not how to bear.
The anxious day induc'd the sleepless night,
And my vex'd spirit never knew delight:
Coy Pleasure mock'd me with delusive charms,
Still the thin shadow fled my clasping arms:
Or if some actual joy I seem'd to taste,
Another's pleasure laid my blessings waste:
One truth I prov'd, that lurking Envy hides
In ev'ry heart where Vanity presides,
A fairer face would rob my soul of rest,
And fix a scorpion in my wounded breast.
Or, if my elegance of form prevail'd
And haply her inferior graces fail'd:
Yet still some cause of wretchedness I found,
Some barbed shaft my shatter'd peace to wound.
Perhaps her gay attire exceeded mine—
When she was finer, how could I be fine?

Syl. Pardon my interruption, beauteous maid!
Can truth have prompted what you just have said?
What! can the poor pre-eminence of dress
Ease the pain'd heart, or give it happiness?
Or can you think your robes, though rich and fine,
Possess intrinsic value more than mine?

Ura. So close our nature is to vice allied,
Our very comforts are the source of pride;
And dress, so much corruption reigns within,
Is both the consequence and cause of sin.

Cle. Of Happiness unfound I too complain,
Sought in a diff'rent path, but sought in vain!
I sigh'd for fame, I languish'd for renown,
I would be flatter'd, prais'd, admir'd and known,
On daring wing my mountain spirit soar'd,
And Science through her boundless fields explor'd:
I scorn'd the salique laws of pedant schools,
Which chain our genius down by tasteless rules,
I long'd to burst these female bonds, which held
My sex in awe, by vanity impell'd:
To boast each various faculty of mind,
Thy graces, Pope! with Johnson's learning join'd:
Like Swift with strongly pointed ridicule,
To brand the villain, and abash the fool:
To judge with taste, with spirit to compose,
Now mount in epic, now descend to prose;
To join, like Burke, the beauteous and sublime,
Or build, with Milton's art, 'the lofty rhyme:'
Through Fancy's fields I rang'd; I strove to hit
Melmoth's chaste style, and Prior's easy wit:
Thy classic graces, Mason, to display,
And court the Muse of Elegy with Gray:
I rav'd of Shakspeare's flame and Dryden's rage,
And ev'ry charm of Otway's melting page.
I talk'd by rote the jargon of the schools,
Of critic laws, and Aristotle's rules;
Of passion, sentiment, and style, and grace,
And unities of action, time, and place.
The daily duties of my life forgot,
To study fiction, incident, and plot:
Howe'er the conduct of my life might err,
Still my dramatic plans were regular.

Ura. Who aims at ev'ry science, soon will find
The field how vast, how limited the mind!

Cle. Abstruser studies soon my fancy caught,
The poet in th' astronomer forgot:
The schoolmen's systems now my mind employ'd, [Void:
Their crystal Spheres, their Atoms and their
Newton and Halley all my soul inspir'd,
And numbers less than calculations fir'd;
Descartes and Euclid, shar'd my varying breast,
And plans and problems all my soul possess'd.
Less pleas'd to sing inspiring Phœbus' ray
Than mark the flaming comet's devious way.
The pale moon dancing on the silver stream,
And the mild lustre of her trembling beam,
No more could charm my philosophic pride,
Which sought her influence on the flowing tide.
No more ideal beauties fir'd my thought,
Which only facts and demonstrations sought.
Let common eyes, I said, with transport view
The earth's bright verdure, or the heav'n's soft blue,
False is the pleasure, the delight is vain,
Colours exist but in the vulgar brain.
I now with Locke trod metaphysic soil,
Now chas'd coy Nature through the tracts of Boyle;
To win the wreath of Fame, by Science twin'd,
More than the love of science fir'd my mind.
I seized on Learning's superficial part,
And title page and index got by heart;
Some learn'd authority I still would bring
To grace my talk and prove—the plainest thing
This the chief transport I from science drew,
That all might know how much Cleora knew.
Not love, but wonder, I aspir'd to raise,
And miss'd affection, while I grasp'd at praise.

Past. To me, no joys could pomp or fame impart,
Far softer thoughts possess'd my virgin heart.
No prudent parent form'd my ductile youth,
Nor led my footsteps in the paths of truth.
Left to myself to cultivate my mind,
Pernicious novels their soft entrance find;
Their pois'nous influence led my mind astray;
I sigh'd for something, what, I could not say.
I fancy'd virtues which were never seen,
And dy'd for heroes who have never been:
I sicken'd with disgust at sober sense,
And loath'd the pleasures worth and truth dispense;
I scorn'd the manners of the world I saw;
My guide was fiction, and romance my law.
Distemper'd thoughts my wand'ring fancy fill,
Each wind a zephyr, and each brook a rill;
I found adventures in each common tale,
And talk'd and sigh'd to ev'ry passing gale;
Convers'd with echoes, woods, and shades, and bow'rs,
Cascades and grottos, fields and streams and flow'rs.
Retirement, more than crowds, had learn'd to please;
For treach'rous Leisure feeds the soft disease.
There, plastic Fancy ever moulds at will
Th' obedient image with a dang'rous skill;
The charming fiction with alluring art,
Awakes the passions, and infects the heart.
A fancy'd heroine, an ideal wife;
I loath'd the offices of real life.
These all were dull and tame, I long'd to prove
The gen'rous ardours of unequal love;
Some marvel still my wayward heart must strike,

Or prince, or peasant, each had charms alike:
Whate'er inverted nature, custom, law,
With joy I courted, and with transport saw.
In the dull walk of Virtue's quiet round,
No aliment my fever'd fancy found;
Each duty to perform observant still
But those which God and Nature bade me fill.
Eliza (*To Urania.*) O save me from the errors of deceit,
And all the dangers wealth and beauty meet.
Past. Reason perverted, Fancy on her throne,
My soul to all my sex's softness prone;
I neither spoke nor look'd as mortal ought;
To sense abandon'd, and by Folly taught:
A victim to Imagination's sway,
Which stole my health, and rest, and peace away;
Professions, void of meaning, I receiv'd,
And still I found them false—and still believ'd:
Imagin'd all who courted me, approv'd;
Who prais'd, esteem'd me; and who flatter'd, lov'd.
Fondly I hop'd (now vain those hopes appear)
Each man was faithful, and each maid sincere.
Still Disappointment mock'd the ling'ring day;
Still new-born wishes led my soul astray.
When in the rolling year no joy I find,
I trust the next, the next will sure be kind.
The next fallacious as the last appears,
And sends me on to still remoter years.
They come, they promise—but forget to give:
I live not, but I still intend to live.
At length, deceiv'd in all my schemes of bliss.
I join'd these three in search of Happiness.
Eliza. Is this the world of which we want a sight?
Are these the beings who are call'd polite?
Sylvia. If so, oh gracious Heav'n, hear Sylvia's prayer:
Preserve me still in humble virtue here!
Far from such baneful pleasures may I live,
And keep, O keep me, from the taint they give!
Lau. No love of fame my torpid bosom warms,
No Fancy soothes me, and no pleasure charms!
Yet still remote from happiness I stray,
No guiding star illumes my trackless way,
My mind, nor wit misleads nor passion goads,
But the dire rust of indolence corrodes;
This eating canker, with malignant stealth,
Destroys the vital pow'rs of moral health.
Till now, I 've slept on Life's tumultuous tide,
No principle of action for my guide.
From ignorance my chief misfortunes flow;
I never wish'd to learn, or car'd to know.
With ev'ry folly slow-pac'd Time beguil'd:
In size a woman, but in soul a child.
In slothful ease my moments crept away,
And busy trifles fill'd the tedious day;
I liv'd extempore, as Fancy fir'd,
As chance directed, or caprice inspir'd:
Too indolent to think, too weak to choose,
Too soft to blame, too gentle to refuse;
My character was stamp'd from those around:
The figures they, my mind the simple ground.
Fashion, with monstrous forms, the canvass stain'd,
Till nothing of my genuine self remain'd;
My pliant soul from chance receiv'd its bent,
And neither good perform'd, nor evil meant.
From right to wrong, from vice to virtue thrown,
No character possessing of its own.
To shun fatigue I made my only law;
Yet ev'ry night my wasted spirits saw.
No plan e'er mark'd the duties of the day,
Which stole in tasteless apathy away:
No energy inform'd my languid mind
No joy the idle e'er must hope to find.
Weak indecision all my actions sway'd;
The day was lost before the choice was made.
Though more to folly than to guilt inclin'd,
A drear vacuity possess'd my mind;
Too old with infant sports to be amus'd,
Unfit for converse, and to books unus'd,
The wise avoided me, they could not hear
My senseless prattle with a patient ear.
I sought retreat, but found, with strange surprise,
Retreat is pleasant only to the wise;
The crowded world by vacant minds is sought,
Because it saves th' expense and pain of thought.
Disgusted, restless, ev'ry plan amiss,
I come with these in search of Happiness.
Urania. O happy they for whom, in early age,
Enlight'ning Knowledge spreads her letter'd page!
Teaches each headstrong passion to control.
And pours her lib'ral lesson on the soul!
Ideas grow from books their nat'ral food,
As aliment is chang'd to vital blood.
Though faithless Fortune strip her vot'ry bare,
Though Malice haunt him, and though Envy tear,
Nor Time, nor Chance, nor Want, can e'er destroy
This soul-felt solace, and this bosom joy!
Cleora. We thus united by one common fate,
Each discontented with her present state,
One common scheme pursue; resolv'd to know
If Happiness can e'er be found below.
Urania. Your candour, beauteous damsels, I approve,
Your foibles pity, and your merits love.
But ere I say the methods you must try
To gain the glorious prize for which you sigh,
Your fainting strength and spirits must be cheer'd
With a plain meal, by Temperance prepar'd.
Florella. No luxury our humble board attends;
But Love and Concord are its smiling friends.

SONG.

I.

Hail artless Simplicity beautiful maid,
In the genuine attractions of Nature array'd
Let the rich and the proud, and the gay and the vain,
Still laugh at the graces that move in thy train.

II.

No charm in thy modest allurements they find;
The pleasures they follow a sting leave behind.
Can criminal passion enrapture the breast
Like Virtue, with Peace and Serenity blest?

III.

O would you Simplicity's precepts attend,
Like us, with delight at her altar you'd bend;
The pleasures she yields would with joy be em brac'd,
You'd practise from virtue and love them from taste.

IV.

The linnet enchants us the bushes among;
Though cheap the musician, yet sweet is the song;
We catch the soft warbling in air as it floats,
And with ecstacy hang on the ravishing notes.

V.

Our water is drawn from the clearest of springs,
And our food, nor disease nor satiety brings;
Our mornings are cheerful, our labours are blest,
Our ev'nings are pleasant, our nights crown'd with rest.

VI.

From our culture yon garden its ornament finds,
And we catch at the hint for improving our minds;
To live to some purpose we constantly try,
And we mark by our actions the days as they fly.

VII.

Since such are the joys that Simplicity yields,
We may well be content with our woods and our fields:
How useless to us then, ye great, were your wealth,
When without it we purchase both pleasure and health!

[*They retire into the cottage.*

Scene—A rural entertainment.

FLORELLA, EUPHELIA, CLEORA, LAURINDA, PASTORELLA.

FLORELLA (*sings.*)

I.

While Beauty and Pleasure are now in their prime,
And Folly and Fashion expect our whole time,
Ah! let not those phantoms our wishes engage;
Let us live so in youth, that we blush not in age.

II.

Though the vain and the gay may allure us awhile,
Yet let not their flatt'ry our prudence beguile;
Let us covet those charms that will never decay,
Nor listen to all that deceivers can say.

III.

'How the tints of the rose and the jasmine's perfume!
The eglantine's fragrance, the lilac's gay bloom,
Though fair and though fragrant, unheeded may lie,
For that neither is sweet when Florella is by.'

IV.

I sigh not for beauty, nor languish for wealth,
But grant me, kind Providence, virtue and health;
Then, richer than kings and as happy as they,
My days shall pass sweetly and swiftly away.

V.

When age shall steal on me, and youth is no more,
And the moralist Time shakes his glass at my door,
What charm in lost beauty or wealth should I find? [mind.
My treasure, my wealth, is a sweet peace of

VI.

That peace I'll preserve then, as pure as was giv'n,
And taste in my bosom an earnest of Heav'n;
Thus virtue and wisdom can warm the cold scene,
And sixty may flourish as gay as sixteen.

VII.

And when long I the burden of life shall have borne, [corn,
And Death with his sickle shall cut the ripe
Resign'd to my fate, without murmur or sigh,
I'll bless the kind summons, and lie down and die.

Euphe. Thus sweetly pass the hours of rural ease!
Here life is bliss, and pleasures truly please!
Past. With joy we view the dangers we have past,
Assur'd we've found felicity at last.
Flor. Esteem none happy by their outward air;
All have their portion of allotted care.
Though wisdom wears the semblance of content,
When the full heart with agony is rent,
Secludes its anguish from the public view,
And by secluding learns to conquer too:
Denied the fond indulgence to complain,
The aching heart its peace may best regain.
By love directed, and in mercy meant,
Are trials suffer'd and afflictions sent;
To stem impetuous Passion's furious tide,
To curb the insolence of prosp'rous Pride,
To wean from earth, and bid our wishes soar
To that blest clime where pain shall be no more;
Where wearied Virtue shall for refuge fly,
And ev'ry tear be wip'd from ev'ry eye.
Cleora. List'ning to you, my heart can never cease
To rev'rence Virtue, and to sigh for peace.
Flor. Know, e'en Urania, that accomplish'd fair [care,
Whose goodness makes her Heaven's peculiar
Though born to all that affluence can bestow,
Has felt the deep reverse of human wo:
Yet meek in grief, and patient in distress,
She knew the hand that wounds has pow'r to bless.
Grateful she bows, for what is left her still,
To HIM whose love dispenses good and ill;
To HIM who, while his bounty thousands fed,
Had not himself a place to lay his head;
To HIM who that he might our wealth insure,
Though rich himself consented to be poor.
Taught by his precepts, by his practice taught,
Her will submitted, and resigned her thought,
Through faith, she looks beyond this dark abode,
To scenes of glory near the throne of God

Enter URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

Ura. Since gentle nymphs! my friendship to obtain,
You've sought with eager step this peaceful plain,
My honest counsel with attention hear,
Though plain, well meant, imperfect, yet sincere;
What from maturer years alone I've known,

What time has taught me, and experience shown,
No polish'd phrase my artless speech will grace,
But unaffected Candour fill its place:
My lips shall flatt'ry's smooth deceit refuse,
And truth be all the eloquence I'll use.
Know then, that life's chief happiness and wo,
From good or evil education flow;
And hence our future dispositions rise;
The vice we practice, or the good we prize.
When pliant Nature any form receives,
That precept teaches or example gives,
The yielding mind with virtue should be grac'd,
For first impressions seldom are effac'd.
Then holy habits, then chastis'd desires,
Should regulate disorder'd Nature's fires.
If Ignorance then, her iron sway maintain,
If prejudice preside, or Passion reign,
If Vanity preserve her native sway,
If selfish tempers cloud the op'ning day,
If no kind hand impetuous Pride restrain,
But for the wholesome curb we give the rein;
The erring principle is rooted fast,
And fix'd the habit that through life may last.

Past. With heartfelt penitence we now deplore
Those squander'd hours, that time can ne'er restore.

Ura. Euphelia sighs for flatt'ry, dress, and show:
The common sources these of female wo!
In Beauty's sphere pre-eminence to find,
She slights the culture of th' immortal mind:
I would not rail at Beauty's charming pow'r,
I would but have her aim at something more;
The fairest symmetry of form or face,
From intellect receives its highest grace;
The brightest eyes ne'er dart such piercing fires,
As when a soul irradiates and inspires:
Beauty with reason needs not quite dispense,
And coral lips may sure speak common sense:
Beauty makes Virtue lovelier still appear;
Virtue makes Beauty more divinely fair!
Confirms its conquests o'er the willing mind,
And those your beauties gain, your virtues bind.
Yet would ambition's fire your bosom fill,
Its flame repress not—be ambitious still;
Let nobler views your best attention claim,
The object chang'd, the energy the same:
Those very passions which our heart invade,
If rightly pointed, blessings may be made.
Indulge the true ambition to excel
In that best art—the art of living well.
But first extirpate from your youthful breast
That rankling torment which destroys your rest:
All other faults may take a higher aim,
But hopeless Envy must be still the same.
Some other passions may be turn'd to good,
But Envy must subdue, or be subdu'd.
This fatal gangrene to our moral life,
Rejects all palliatives, and asks the knife;
Excision spar'd, it taints the vital part,
And spreads its deadly venom to the heart.

Uph. Unhappy those to bliss who seek the way,
In pow'r superior, or in splendour gay!
Inform'd by thee, no more vain man shall find
The charm of flatt'ry taint Euphelia's mind:
By thee instructed still my views shall rise,
Nor stop at any mark beneath the skies.

Urania. In fair Laurinda's uninstructed mind,
The want of culture, not of sense, we find;
Whene'er you sought the good, or shunn'd the ill,
'Twas more from temper than from principle:
Your random life to no just rules reduc'd,
'Twas chance the virtue or the vice produc'd:
The casual goodness *Impulse* has to boast,
Like morning dews, or transient show'rs is lost,
While Heav'n-taught Virtue pours her constant tide,
Like streams by living fountains still supply'd.
Be wisdom still, though late, your earnest care,
Nor waste the precious hours in vain despair:
Associate with the good, attend the sage,
And meekly listen to experienc'd age.
What, if acquirements you have fail'd to gain,
Such as the wise may want the bad attain
Yet still religion's sacred treasures lie
Inviting, open, plain to ev'ry eye;
For ev'ry age, for ev'ry genius fit,
Nor limited to science nor to wit;
Not bound by taste, to genius not confin'd,
But all may learn the truth for all design'd.
Though low the talents, and th' acquirements small,
The gift of grace divine is free to all;
She calls, solicits, courts you to be blest,
And points to mansions of eternal rest.
And when, advanc'd in years, matur'd in sense,
Think not with farther care you may dispense;
'Tis fatal to the int'rests of the soul
To stop the race before we've reach'd the goal;
For nought our higher progress can preclude
So much as thinking we're already good.
The human heart ne'er knows a state of rest:
Bad leads to worse, and better tends to best.
We either gain or lose, we sink or rise,
Nor rests our struggling Nature till she dies:
Then place the standard of perfection high;
Pursue and grasp it, e'en beyond the sky.

Lau. O that important Time could back return
Those misspent hours whose loss I deeply mourn!
Accept, just Heav'n, my penitence sincere,
My heartfelt anguish, and my fervent pray'r!

Ura. I pity Pastorella's hapless fate,
By nature gentle, gen'rous, mild, and great;
One false propension all her pow'rs confin'd,
And chain'd her finer faculties of mind;
Yet ev'ry virtue might have flourish'd there,
With early culture and maternal care.
If good we plant not, vice will fill the place,
And rankest weeds the richest soils deface.
Learn, how ungovern'd thoughts the mind pervert,
And to disease all nourishment convert.
Ah! happy she, whose wisdom learns to find
A healthful fancy and a well train'd mind!
A sick man's wildest dreams less wild are found,
Than the day-visions of a mind unsound.
Disorder'd phantasies indulg'd too much,
Like harpies, always taint whate'er they touch.
Fly soothing Solitude! fly vain Desire!
Fly such soft verse as fans the dang'rous fire!
Seek action; 'tis the scene which Virtue loves;
The vig'rous sun not only shines, but moves.

From sickly thoughts with quick abhorrence start,
And rule the fancy if you'd rule the heart:
By active goodness, by laborious schemes,
Subdue wild visions, and delusive dreams.
No earthly good a Christian's views should bound,
For ever rising should his aims be found.
Leave that fictitious good your fancy feigns
For scenes where real bliss eternal reigns:
Look to that region of immortal joys,
Where fear disturbs not, nor possession cloys;
Beyond what Fancy forms of rosy bow'rs,
Or blooming chaplets of unfading flow'rs;
Fairer than e'er imagination drew,
Or poet's warmest visions ever knew.
Press eager onward to those blissful plains
Where life eternal, joy perpetual reigns.
Past. I mourn the errors of my thoughtless youth,
And long, with thee, to tread the paths of truth.
Ura. Learning is all the bright Cleora's aim;
She seeks the loftiest pinnacle of fame;
On interdicted ground presumes to stand,
And grasps at Science with a vent'rous hand:
The privilege of man she dares invade,
And tears the chaplet from his laurell'd head.
Why found her merit on a foreign claim?
Why lose a substance to acquire a name?
Let the proud sex possess their vaunted pow'rs:
Be other triumphs, other glories ours!
The gentler charms which wait on female life,
Which grace the daughter and adorn the wife,
Be these our boast; yet these may well admit
Of various knowledge, and of blameless wit:
Of sense, resulting from a nurtur'd mind,
Of polish'd converse, and of taste refin'd:
Of that quick intuition of the best,
Which feels the graceful, and rejects the rest:
Which finds the right by shorter ways than rules
An art which Nature teaches—not the schools.
Thus conq'ring Sevigne the heart obtains,
While Dacier only admiration gains.
Know, fair aspirer, could you even hope,
To speak like Stonehouse, or to write like Pope,
To all the wonders of the poet's lyre,
Join all that taste can add, or wit inspire.
With every various pow'r of learning fraught;
The flow of style and the sublime of thought;
Yet, if the milder graces of the mind,
Graces peculiar to the sex design'd,
Good nature, patience, sweetness void of art;
If these embellished not your virgin heart,
You might be dazzling, but not truly bright;
Might glare, but not emit an useful light;
A meteor, not a star, you would appear;
For woman shines but in her proper sphere.
Accomplishments by Heav'n were sure design'd
Less to adorn than to amend the mind:
Each should contribute to this gen'ral end,
And all to virtue, as their centre, tend.
Th' acquirements, which our best esteem invite,
Should not project, but soften, mix, unite:
In glaring light not strongly be display'd,
But sweetly lost, and melted into shade.
Cleora. Confus'd with shame, to thy reproofs I bend,
Thou best adviser, and thou truest friend!
From thee I'll learn to judge and act aright,
Humility with Knowledge to unite:
The finish'd character must both combine,
The perfect woman must in either shine.
Ura. Florella shines adorn'd with every grace,
Her heart all virtue, as all charms her face:
Above the wretched, and below the great,
Kind Heav'n has fix'd her in a middle state;
The dæmon Fashion never warped her soul,
Her passions move at Piety's control;
Her eyes the movements of her heart declare,
For what she dares to be, she dares appear;
Unlectur'd in Dissimulation's school,
To smile by precept, and to blush by rule:
Her thoughts ingenuous, ever open lie,
Nor shrink from close Inspection's keenest eye;
No dark disguise about her heart is thrown;
'Tis Virtue's int'rest fully to be known;
Her nat'ral sweetness ev'ry heart obtains;
What Art and Affectation miss, she gains.
She smooths the path of my declining years,
Augments my comforts, and divides my cares.
Past. O sacred Friendship! O exalted state!
The choicest bounty of indulgent fate!
Ura. Let woman then her real good discern,
And her true int'rests of Urania learn:
As some fair violet, loveliest of the glade,
Sheds its mild fragrance on the lonely shade,
Withdraws its modest head from public sight,
Nor courts the sun, nor seeks the glare of light;
Should some rude hand profanely dare intrude,
And bear its beauties from its native wood,
Expos'd abroad its languid colours fly,
Its form decays, and all its odours die
So woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great,
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm,
Fearful of Fame, unwilling to be known,
Should seek but Heaven's applauses and her own;
Hers be the task to seek the lonely cell
Where modest Want and silent Anguish dwell;
Raise the weak head, sustain the feeble knees,
Cheer the cold heart, and chase the dire disease.
The splendid deeds, which only seek a name,
Are paid their just reward in present fame;
But know, the awful all-disclosing day,
The long arrear of secret worth shall pay;
Applauding saints shall hear with fond regard.
And He, who witness'd here, shall there reward.
Euph. With added grace she pleads Religion's cause,
Who from her life her virtuous lesson draws.
Ura. In vain, ye fair! from place to place you roam,
For that true peace which must be found at home:
No change of fortune, nor of scene can give
The bliss you seek, which in the soul must live.
Then look no more abroad; in your own breast
Seek the true seat of happiness and rest.
Nor small, my friends! the vigilance I ask,
Watch well yourselves, this is the Christian's task.
The cherish'd sin by each must be assail'd,
New efforts added, where the past have fail'd:
The darling error check'd, the will subdu'd,
The heart by penitence and pray'r renew'd
Nor hope for *perfect* happiness below.

Celestial plants on earth reluctant grow.
He who our frail mortality did bear,
Though free from sin, was not exempt from care.
Cleora. Let's join to bless that Pow'r who brought us here,
Adore his goodness, and his will revere;
Assur'd, that Peace exists but in the mind,
And Piety alone that Peace can find.
Ura. In its true light this transient life regard:
This is a state of trial, not reward.
Though rough the passage, peaceful is the port,
The bliss is perfect, the probation short.
Of human wit beware the fatal pride;
An useful follower, but a dang'rous guide:
On holy Faith's aspiring pinions rise;
Assert your birth-right, and assume the skies.
Fountain of Being! teach us to devote
To Thee each purpose, action, word and thought!
Thy grace our hope, thy love our only boast,
Be all distinctions in the Christian lost!
Be this in ev'ry state our wish alone,
Almighty, Wise and Good, Thy will be done!

ODE TO CHARITY.

TO BE PERFORMED BY THE CHARACTERS OF THE PIECE.

I.

O Charity, divinely wise,
Thou meek-ey'd daughter of the skies!
From the pure fountain of eternal light,
Where fair, immutable, and ever bright,
The beatific vision shines,
Where angel with archangel joins
In choral songs to sing His praise,
Parent of Life, Ancient of Days,
Who was ere Time existed, and shall be
Through the wide round of vast Eternity;
Oh come, thy warm celestial beams impart,
Enlarge my feelings, and expand my heart!

II.

Descend from radiant realms above,
Thou effluence of that boundless love
Whence joy and peace in streams unsully'd flow,
Oh deign to make thy lov'd abode below!
Though sweeter strains adorn'd my tongue
Than saint conceiv'd or seraph sung,
And though my glowing fancy caught
Whatever Art or Nature taught,
Yet if this hard unfeeling heart of mine
Ne'er felt thy force, O Charity divine!
An empty shadow Science would be found
My knowledge ignorance, my wit a sound!

III.

Though my prophetic spirit knew
To bring futurity to view,
Without thy aid e'en this would not avail,
For tongues shall cease and prophecies shall fail.
Come then, thou sweet immortal guest,
Shed thy soft influence o'er my breast,
Bring with thee Faith, divinely bright,
And Hope, fair Harbinger of light,
To clear each mist with their pervading ray,
To fit my soul for Heav'n, and point the way;
There Perfect Happiness her sway maintains,
For there the God of Peace for ever reigns.

STORIES

FOR PERSONS OF THE MIDDLE RANKS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

These Stories, which were first published, among a great number of others, in the Cheap Repository, under the signature Z, are here presented to the reader, much enlarged and improved. Such of them as are comprised in this volume being adapted to persons in a superior station to those which are contained in a former edition, and it was thought better to separate and class them accordingly. A brief account of the institution here referred to, will be given in a subsequent place.

THE HISTORY OF MR. FANTOM.

THE NEW FASHIONED PHILOSOPHER,

AND HIS MAN WILLIAM.

Mr. Fantom was a retail trader in the city of London. As he had no turn to any expensive vices, he was reckoned a sober decent man, but he was covetous and proud, selfish and conceited. As soon as he got forward in the world, his vanity began to display itself, though not in the ordinary method, that of making a figure and living away; but still he was tormented with a longing desire to draw public notice, and to distinguish himself. He felt a general sense of discontent at what he was, with a general ambition to be something which he was not; but this desire had not yet turned itself to any particular object. It was not by his money he could hope to be distinguished, for half his acquaintance had more, and a man must be rich indeed to be noted for his riches in London. Mr. Fantom's mind was a prey to his vain imaginations. He despised all those little acts of kindness and charity which every man is called to perform every day; and while he was contriving grand schemes, which lay quite out of his reach, he neglected the ordinary duties of life, which lay directly before him. Selfishness was his governing principle. He fancied he was lost in the mass of general society: and the usual means of attaching importance to insignificance occurred to him; that of getting into clubs and societies. To be connected with a party would at least make him known to that party, be it ever so low and contemptible; and this local importance it is which draws off vain minds from those scenes of general usefulness, in which, though they are of more value, they are of less distinction.

About this time he got hold of a famous little book written by the New Philosopher, whose pestilent doctrines have gone about seeking whom they may destroy; these doctrines found a ready entrance into Mr. Fantom's mind; a mind at once shallow and inquisitive, speculative and vain, ambitious and dissatisfied. As almost every book was new to him, he fell into the common error of those who begin to read late in life—that of thinking that what he did not know himself, was equally new to others; and he was apt to fancy that he and the author he was reading were the only two people in the world who knew any thing. This book led to the grand discovery; he had now found what his heart panted after—a way to *distinguish himself*. To start out a full grown philosopher at once, to be wise without education, to dispute without learning, and to make proselytes without argument, was a short cut to fame, which well suited his vanity and his ignorance. He rejoiced that he had been so clever as to examine for himself, pitied his friends who took things upon trust, and was resolved to assert the freedom of his own mind. To a man fond of bold novelties and daring paradoxes, solid argument would be flat, and truth would be dull, merely because it is not new. Mr. Fantom believed, not in proportion to the strength of the evidence, but to the impudence of the assertion. The trampling on holy ground with dirty shoes, the smearing the sanctuary with filth and mire, the calling prophets and apostles by the most scurrilous names was new, and dashing, and dazzling. Mr. Fantom, now being set free from the chains of slavery and superstition, was resolved to show his zeal in the usual way, by trying to free others; but it would have hurt his vanity had he known that he was the convert of a man who had written only for the vulgar, who had *invented* nothing, no, not even one idea of original wickedness; but who had stooped to rake up out of the kennel of infidelity, all the loathsome dregs and offal dirt, which politer unbelievers had thrown away as too gross and offensive for the better bred readers.

Mr. Fantom, who considered that a philoso-

pher must set up with a little sort of stock in trade, now picked up all the common-place notions against Christianity, which have been answered a hundred times over: these he kept by him ready cut and dried, and brought out in all companies with a zeal which would have done honour to a better cause, but which the friends to a better cause are not so apt to discover. He soon got all the cant of the new school. He prated about *narrowness*, and *ignorance*, and *bigotry*, and *prejudice*, and *priestcraft* on the one hand; and on the other, of *public good*, the *love of mankind*, and *liberality*, and *candour*, and *toleration*, and above all, *benevolence*. Benevolence, he said, made up the whole of religion, and all the other parts of it were nothing but cant, and jargon, and hypocrisy. By benevolence he understood a gloomy and indefinite anxiety about the happiness of people with whom he was utterly disconnected, and whom Providence had put it out of his reach either to serve or injure. And by the happiness this benevolence was so anxious to promote, he meant an exemption from the power of the laws, and an emancipation from the restraints of religion, conscience, and moral obligation.

Finding, however, that he made little impression on his old club at the Cat and Bagpipes, he grew tired of their company. This club consisted of a few sober citizens, who met of an evening for a little harmless recreation after business; their object was, not to reform parliament, but their own shops; not to correct the abuses of government, but of parish officers; not to cure the excesses of administration, but of their own porters and apprentices; to talk over the news of the day without aspiring to direct the events of it. They read the papers with that anxiety which every honest man feels in the daily history of his country. But as trade, which they *did* understand, flourished, they were careful not to reprobate those public measures by which it was protected, and which they did *not* understand. In such turbulent times it was a comfort to each to feel he was a tradesman, and not a statesman; that he was not called to responsibility for a trust for which he found he had no talents, while he was at full liberty to employ the talents he really possessed, in fairly amassing a fortune, of which the laws would be the best guardian, and government the best security. Thus a legitimate self-love, regulated by prudence, and restrained by principle, produced peaceable subjects and good citizens; while in Fantom, a boundless selfishness and inordinate vanity converted a discontented trader into a turbulent politician.

There was, however, one member of the Cat and Bagpipes whose society he could not resolve to give up, though they seldom agreed, as indeed no two men in the same class and habits of life could less resemble each other. Mr. Trueman was an honest, plain, simple-hearted tradesman of the good old cut, who feared God and followed his business; he went to church twice on Sundays, and minded his shop all the week, spent frugally, gave liberally, and saved moderately. He lost, however, some ground in Mr. Fantom's esteem, because he paid his taxes, without disputing, and read his Bible without doubting.

Mr. Fantom now began to be tired of every thing in trade except the profits of it: for the more the word benevolence was in his mouth, the more did selfishness gain dominion in his heart. He, however, resolved to retire for a while into the country, and devote his time to his new plans, schemes, theories, and projects for the public good. A life of talking, and reading and writing, and disputing, and teaching, and proselyting, now struck him as the only life; so he soon set out for the country with his family; for unhappily Mr. Fantom had been the husband of a very worthy woman many years before the new philosophy had discovered that marriage was a shameful infringement on human liberty, and an abridgement of the rights of man. To this family was now added his new footman, William Wilson, whom he had taken with a good character out of a sober family. Mr. Fantom was no sooner settled than he wrote to invite Mr. Trueman to come and pay him a visit, for he would have burst if he could not have got some one to whom he might display his new knowledge; he knew that if on the one hand Trueman was no scholar, yet on the other he was no fool; and though he despised his *prejudices*, yet he thought he might be made a good decoy duck; for if he could once bring Trueman over, the whole club at the Cat and Bagpipes might be brought to follow his example; and thus he might see himself at the head of a society of his own proselytes; the supreme object of a philosopher's ambition. Trueman came accordingly. He soon found that however he might be shocked at the impious doctrines his friend maintained, yet that an important lesson might be learned even from the worst enemies of truth; namely, an ever wakeful attention to their grand object. If they set out with talking of trade or politics, of private news or public affairs, still Mr. Fantom was ever on the watch to hitch in his darling doctrines; whatever he began with, he was sure to end with a pert squib at the Bible, a vapid jest on the clergy, the miseries of superstition, and the blessings of philosophy. 'Oh!' said Trueman to himself, 'when shall I see Christians half so much in earnest? Why is it that almost all zeal is on the wrong side?'

'Well, Mr. Fantom,' said Trueman one day at breakfast, 'I am afraid you are leading but an idle sort of life here.'—'Idle, sir!' said Fantom; 'I now first begin to live to some purpose; I have indeed lost too much time, and wasted my talents on a little retail trade, in which one is of no note; one can't distinguish one's self.' 'So much the better,' said Trueman;' 'I had rather not distinguish myself, unless it was by leading a better life than my neighbours. There is nothing I should dread more than being talk'd about. I dare say now heaven is in a good measure filled with people whose names were never heard out of their own street and village. So I beg leave not to distinguish myself!' 'Yes, but one may, if it is only by signing one's name to an essay or paragraph in a newspaper,' said Fantom.—'Heaven keep John Trueman's name out of a newspaper,' interrupted he in a fright.

'for if it be there, it must either be found in the Old Bailey or the bankrupt list, unless, indeed, I were to remove shop, or sell off my old stock. Well, but Mr. Fantum, you, I suppose, are now as happy as the day is long?' 'O yes,' replied Fantom, with a gloomy sigh, which gave the lie to his words, 'perfectly happy! I wonder you do not give up all your sordid employments, and turn philosopher!' 'Sordid indeed!' said Trueman, 'do not call names, Mr. Fantom; I shall never be ashamed of my trade. What is it has made this country so great? a country whose merchants are princes? It is trade, Mr. Fantom, trade. I cannot say indeed, as well as I love business, but now and then, when I am overworked, I wish I had a little more time to look after my soul; but the fear that I should not devote the time, if I had it, to the best purpose, makes me work on, though often, when I am balancing my accounts, I tremble, lest I should neglect to balance the grand account. But still, since, like you, I am a man of no education, I am more afraid of the temptations of leisure, than of those of business, I never was bred to read more than a chapter in the Bible, or some other good book, or the magazine and newspaper; and all that I can do now, after shop is shut, is to take a walk with my children in the field besides. But if I had nothing to do from morning to night, I might be in danger of turning politician or philosopher. No, neighbour Fantom, depend upon it, that where there is no learning, next to God's grace, the best preservative of human virtue is business. As to our political societies, like the armies in the cave of Adullam, 'every man that is in distress, and every man that is in debt, and every man that is discontented, will always join themselves unto them.'

Fantom. You have narrow views, Trueman. What *can* be more delightful than to see a paper of one's own in print against tyranny and superstition, contrived with so much ingenuity, that, though the law is on the look-out for treason and blasphemy, a little change of name defeats its scrutiny. For instance; you may stigmatize *England* under the name of *Rome*, and *Christianity* under that of *Popery*. The true way is to attack whatever you have a mind to injure, under another name, and the best means to destroy the use of a thing, is to produce a few incontrovertible facts against the abuses of it. Our late travellers have inconceivably helped on the cause of the new philosophy, in their ludicrous narratives of credulity, miracles, indulgences, and processions, in popish countries, all which they ridicule under the broad and general name of Religion, Christianity, and *the Church*.' 'And are not you ashamed to defend such knavery?' said Mr. Trueman. 'Those who have a great object to accomplish,' replied Mr. Fantom, 'must not be nice about the means. But to return to yourself Trueman; in your little confined situation you can be of no use.' 'That I deny,' interrupted Trueman; 'I have filled all the parish offices with some credit. I never took a bribe at an election, no not so much as a treat; I take care of my apprentices, and do not set them a bad example by running to plays and Sadler's Wells, in the week or jaunting about in a gig all day on Sundays; for I look upon it that the country jaunt of the master on Sundays exposes his servants to more danger than their whole week's temptation in trade put together.'

Fantom. I once had the same vulgar prejudices about the church and the Sabbath, and all that antiquated stuff. But even on your own narrow principles, how can a thinking being spend his Sunday better (if he must lose one day in seven by having any Sunday at all) than by going into the country to admire the works of nature.

Trueman. I suppose you mean the works of God: for I never read in the Bible that Nature made any thing. I should rather think that she herself was made by Him, who, when he said, 'thou shalt not murder,' said also, 'thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day.' But now do you really think that all that multitude of coaches, chariots, chaises, vis-a-vis, booby-hutches, sulkies, sociables, phactons, gigs, curricles, cabrioles, chairs, stages, pleasure carts, and horses, which crowd our roads; all those country houses within reach, to which the London friends pour in to the gorgeous Sunday feast, which the servants are kept from church to dress; all those public houses under the signs of which you read these alluring words, *an ordinary on Sundays;* I say, do you really believe that all those houses and carriages are crammed with philosophers, who go on Sunday into the country to admire the works of nature, as you call it! Indeed, from the reeling gate of some of them when they go back at night, one might take them for a certain sect called the tippling philosophers. Then in answer to your charge, that a little tradesman can do no good, it is not true; I must tell you that I belong to the Sick Man's Friend, and to the Society for relieving prisoners for small debts.

Fantom. I have no attention to spare to that business, though I would pledge myself to produce a plan by which the *national* debt might be paid off in six months; but all yours are pretty occupations.

Trueman. Then they are better suited to petty men of petty fortune. I had rather have an ounce of real good done with my own hands, and seen with my own eyes, than speculate about doing a ton in a wild way, which I know can never be brought about.

Fantom. I despise a narrow field. O for the reign of universal benevolence! I want to make all mankind good and happy.

Trueman. Dear me! sure that must be a wholesale sort of a job; had you not better try your hand at a town or a parish first!

Fantom. Sir, I have a plan in my head for relieving the miseries of the whole world. Every thing is bad as it now stands. I would alter all the laws; and do away all the religions, and put an end to all the wars in the world. I would every where redress the injustice of fortune, or what the vulgar call Providence. I would put an end to all punishments; I would not leave a single prisoner on the face of the globe. This is what I call doing things on a grand scale. 'A scale with a vengeance,' said Trueman. 'As to releasing the prisoners, however, I do

not so much like that, as it would be liberating a few rogues at the expense of all honest men; but as to the rest of your plans, if all Christian countries would be so good as to turn Christians, it might be helped on a good deal. There would be still misery enough left indeed; because God intended this world should be earth and not heaven. But, sir, among all your oblations, you must abolish human corruption before you can make the world quite as perfect as you pretend. You philosophers seem to me to be ignorant of the very first seed and principle of misery—sin, sir, sin: your system of reform is radically defective; for it does not comprehend that sinful nature from which all misery proceeds. You accuse government of defects which belong to man, to individual man, and of course to man collectively.—Among all your reforms you must reform the human heart; you are only hacking at the branches, without striking at the root. Banishing impiety out of the world, would be like striking off all the pounds from an overcharged bill; and all the troubles which would be left, would be reduced to mere shillings, pence, and farthings, as one may say.'

Fantom. Your project would rivet the chains which mine is design'd to break.

Trueman. Sir, I have no projects. Projects are in general the offspring of restlessness, vanity, and idleness. I am too busy for projects, too contented for theories, and, I hope, have too much honesty and humility for a philosopher. The utmost extent of my ambition at present is, to redress the wrongs of a parish apprentice who has been cruelly used by his master: Indeed I have another little scheme, which is to prosecute a fellow in our street who has suffered a poor wretch in a workhouse, of which he had the care, to perish through neglect, and you must assist me.

Fantom. The parish must do that. You must not apply to me for the redress of such petty grievances. I own that the wrongs of the Poles and South Americans so fill my mind, as to leave me no time to attend to the petty sorrows of workhouses and parish apprentices. It is provinces, empires, continents, that the benevolence of the philosopher embraces; every one can do a little paltry good to his next neighbour.

Trueman. Every one can, but I do not see that every one does. If they would, indeed, your business would be ready done at your hands, and your grand ocean of benevolence would be filled with the drops which private charity would throw into it. I am glad, however, you are such a friend to the prisoners, because I am just now getting a little subscription from our club, to set free our poor old friend Tom Saunders, a very honest brother tradesman, who got first into debt, and then into jail, through no fault of his own, but merely through the pressure of the times. We have each of us allowed a trifle every week towards maintaining Tom's young family since he has been in prison; but we think we shall do much more service to Saunders, and indeed in the end lighten our own expense, by paying down at once a little sum to restore him to the comforts of life, and put him in a way of maintaining his family again. We have made up the money all except five guineas I am already promised four, and you have nothing to do but give me the fifth. And so for a single guinea, without any of the trouble, the meetings, and the looking into his affairs, which we have had; which, let me tell you, is the best, and to a man of business, the dearest part of charity, you will at once have the pleasure (and it is no small one) of helping to save a worthy family from starving of redeeming an old friend from gaol, and of putting a little of your boasted benevolence into action. Realize! master Fantom: there is nothing like realizing. 'Why, hark ye, Mr. Trueman,' said Fantom, stammering, and looking very black, 'do not think I value a guinea; no sir, I despise money; it is trash; it is dirt, and beneath the regard of a wise man. It is one of the unfeeling inventions of artificial society. Sir, I could talk to you for half a day on the abuse of riches, and on my own contempt of money.'

Trueman. O pray do not give yourself the trouble; it will be an easier way by half of vindicating yourself from one, and of proving the other, just to put your hand in your pocket and give me a guinea, without saying a word about it: and then to you who value time so much, and money so little, it will cut the matter short. But come now, (for I see you will give nothing) I should be mighty glad to know what is the sort of good you do yourselves, since you always object to what is done by others. 'Sir,' said Mr. Fantom, 'the object of a true philosopher is to diffuse light and knowledge. I wish to see the whole world enlightened.'

Trueman. Amen! if you mean with the light of the Gospel. But if you mean that one religion is as good as another, and that no religion is best of all; and that we shall become wiser and better by setting aside the very means which Providence bestowed to make us wise and good: in short, if you want to make the whole world philosophers, why they had better stay as they are. But as to the true light, I wish it to reach the very lowest, and I therefore bless God for charity-schools, as instruments of diffusing it among the poor.

Fantom, who had no reason to expect that his friend was going to call upon him for a subscription on this account, ventured to praise them: saying, 'I am no enemy to these institutions. I would indeed change the object of instruction, but I would have the whole world instructed.'

Here Mrs. Fantom, who, with her daughter, had quietly sat by at their work, ventured to put in a word, a liberty she seldom took with her husband; who in his zeal to make the whole world free and happy, was too prudent to include his wife among the objects on whom he wished to confer freedom and happiness. 'Then my dear,' said she, 'I wonder you do not let your own servants be taught a little. The maids can scarcely tell a letter, or say the Lord's prayer, and you know you will not allow them time to learn. William, too, has never been at church since we came out of town. He was at first very orderly and obedient, but now he is seldom sober of an evening; and in the morning when he should be rubbing the tables in

the parlour, he is generally lolling upon them, and reading your little manuel of the new philosophy.'—'Mrs. Fantom, said her husband angrily, 'you know that my labours for the public good leave me little time to think of my own family. I must have a great field, I like to do good to hundreds at once.'

'I am very glad of that papa,' said miss Polly; 'for then I hope you will not refuse to subscribe to all those pretty children at the Sunday-school, as you did yesterday, when the gentleman came a begging, because that is the very thing you were wishing for; there are two or three hundred to be done good at once.'

Trueman. Well, Mr. Fantom, you are a wonderful man to keep up such a stock of benevolence at so small an expense. To love mankind so dearly, and yet avoid all opportunities of doing them good; to have such a noble zeal for the millions, and to feel so little compassion for the units; to long to free empires and enlighten kingdoms; and yet deny instruction to your own village, and comfort to your own family. Surely none but a philosopher could indulge so much philanthropy, and so much frugality at the same time. But come, do assist me in a petition I am making in our poorhouse; between the old, whom I want to have better fed, and the young, whom I want to have more worked.

Fantom. Sir my mind is so engrossed with the partition of Poland, that I cannot bring it down to an object of such insignificance. I despise the man whose benevolence is swallowed up in the narrow concerns of his own family, or parish, or country.

Trueman. Well, now I have a notion that it is as well to do one's own duty, as the duty of another man; and that to do good at home, is as well as to do good abroad. For my part, I had as lieve help Tom Saunders to freedom as a Pole or a South American, though I should be very glad to help them too. But one must begin to love somewhere, and to do good somewhere; and I think it is as natural to love one's own family, and to do good in one's own neighbourhood, as to any body else. And if every man in every family, parish, and county, did the same, why then all the schemes would meet, and the end of one parish, where I was doing good, would be the beginning of another parish where somebody else was doing good; so my schemes would jut into my neighbour's; his projects would unite with those of some other local reformer; and all would fit with a sort of dovetail exactness. And what is better, all would join in furnishing a living comment on that practical precept: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.'

Fantom. Sir, a man of large views will be on the watch for great occasions to prove his benevolence.

Trueman. Yes, sir; but if they are so distant that he cannot reach them, or so vast that he cannot grasp them, he may let a thousand little, snug, kind, good actions slip through his fingers in the meanwhile: and so between the great things that he cannot do, and the little ones that he will not do, life passes and nothing will be done.

Just at this moment miss Polly Fantom (whose mother had gone out some time before) started up, let fall her work, and cried out, 'O papa, do but look what a monstrous great fire there is yonder on the common! If it were the fifth of November I should think it were a bonfire. Look how it blazes!'—'I see plain enough what it is,' said Mr. Fantom, sitting down again without the least emotion. 'It is Jenkins's cottage on fire.'—'What, poor John Jenking, who works in our garden, papa?' said the poor girl in great terror. 'Do not be frightened, child,' answered Fantom, we are safe enough; the wind blows the other way. Why did you disturb us for such a trifle, as it was so distant? Come, Mr. Trueman, sit down.'—'Sit down,' said Mr. Trueman, 'I am not a stock, sir, nor a stone, but a man; made of the same common nature with Jenkins, whose house is burning. Come along—let us fly and help him,' continued he running to the door in such haste that he forgot to take his hat, though it hung just before him—'Come Mr. Fantom—come, my little dear—I wish your mamma was here—I am sorry she went out just now—we may all do some good; every body may be of some use at a fire. Even you, miss Polly, may save some of these poor people's things in your apron, while your papa and I hand the buckets.' All this he said as he run along with the young lady in his hand; not doubting but Fantom and his whole family were following close behind him. But the present distress was neither grand enough nor far enough from home to satisfy the wide-stretched benevolence of the philosopher, who sat down within sight of the flames to work at a new pamphlet, which now swallowed up his whole soul, on universal benevolence.

His daughter, indeed, who happily was not yet a philosopher, with Mr. Trueman, followed by the maids, reached the scene of distress. William Wilson, the footman, refused to assist, glad of such an opportunity of being revenged on Jenkins, whom he called a surly fellow, for presuming to complain, because William always purloined the best fruit for himself before he set it on his master's table. Jenkins also, whose duty it was to be out of doors, had refused to leave his own work in the garden, to do Will's work in the house while he got drunk, or read the Rights of Man.

The little dwelling of Jenkins burnt very furiously. Mr. Trueman's exertions were of the greatest service. He directed the willing, and gave an example to the slothful. By living in London, he had been more used to the calamity of fire than the country people, and knew better what was to be done. In the midst of the bustle he saw one woman only who never attempted to be of the least use. She ran backwards and forward, wringing her hands, crying out in a tone of piereing agony, 'Oh, my child! my little Tommy! will no one save my Tommy?'—Any woman might have uttered the same words, but the look which explained them could only come from a mother. Trueman did not stay to ask if she were owner of the house, and mother of the child. It was his way to do all the good which could be done first, and then to ask questions. All he said was,

'Tell me which is the room?' The poor woman, now speechless through terror, could only point up to a little window in the thatch, and then sunk on the ground.

Mr. Trueman made his way through a thick smoke, and ran up the narrow staircase which the fire had not reached. He got safely to the loft, snatched up the little creature, who was sweetly sleeping in its poor hammock, and brought him down naked in his arms: and as he gave him to the half-distracted mother, he felt that her joy and gratitude would have been no bad pay for the danger he had run, even if no higher motive had set him to work. Poor Jenkins, half stupified by his misfortune, had never thought of his child; and his wife, who expected every hour to make him father to a second, had not been able to do any thing towards saving little Tommy.

Mr. Trueman now put the child into miss Fantom's apron, saying, 'Did not I tell you, my dear, that every body could be of use at a fire?' He then desired her to carry the child home, and ordered the poor woman to follow her; saying, he would return himself as soon as he had seen all safe in the cottage.

When the fire was quite out, and Mr. Trueman could be of no further use, he went back to Mr. Fantom's. The instant he opened the parlour door he eagerly cried out, 'Where is the poor woman, Mr, Fantom?' 'Not in my house, I assure you,' answered the philosopher. 'Give me leave to tell you, it was a very romantic thing to send her and her child to me: you should have provided for them at once, like a prudent man.'—'I thought I had done so,' replied Trueman, 'by sending them to the nearest and best house in the parish, as the poor woman seemed to stand in need of immediate assistance.' 'So immediate,' said Fantom, 'that I would not let her come into my house, for fear of what might happen. So I packed her off, with her child in her arms, to the workhouse; with orders to the overseers not to let her want for any thing.'

'And what right have you, Mr. Fantom,' cried Trueman in a high tone, 'to expect that the overseers will be more humane than yourself! But is it possible you can have sent that helpless creature, not only to walk, but to carry a naked child at such a time of night, to a place so distant, so ill provided, and in such a condition? I hope at least you have furnished them with clothes; for all their own little stores were burnt.' 'Not I, indeed;' said Fantom. 'What is the use of parish officers, but to look after these petty things?'

It was Mr. Trueman's way, when he began to feel very angry, not to allow himself to speak; because, he used to say, 'if I give vent to my feelings, I am sure, by some hasty word, to cut myself out work for repentance.' So without making any answer, or even changing his clothes, which were very wet and dirty from having worked so hard at the fire, he walked out again, having first inquired the road the woman had taken. At the door he met Mrs. Fantom returning from her visit. He told her his tale; which she had no sooner heard, than she kindly resolved to accompany him in search of Jenkins's wife. She had a wide common to walk over before she could reach either the workhouse or the nearest cottage. She had crawled along with her baby as far as she was able; but having met with no refreshment at Mr. Fantom's, and her strength quite failing her, she had sunk down on the middle of the common. Happily, Mr. Trueman and Mrs. Fantom came up at this very time. The former had had the precaution to bring a cordial and the latter had gone back and stuffed her pockets with old baby linen. Mr. Trueman soon procured the assistance of a labourer, who happened to pass by, to help him to carry the mother, and Mrs. Fantom carried the little shivering baby.

As soon as they were safely lodged, Mr. Trueman set off in search of poor Jenkins, who was distressed to know what was become of his wife and child; for having heard that they were seen going towards Mr. Fantom's, he despaired of any assistance from that quarter. Mr. Trueman felt no small satisfaction in uniting this poor man to his little family. There was something very moving in this meeting, and in the pious gratitude they expressed for their deliverance. They seemed to forget they had lost their all, in the joy they felt that they had not lost each other. And some disdainful great ones might have smiled to see so much rapture expressed at the safety of a child born to no inheritance but poverty. These are among the feelings with which Providence sometimes overpays the want of wealth. The good people also poured out prayers and blessings on their deliverer, who, not being a philosopher, was no more ashamed of praying with them than he had been of working for them. Mr. Trueman, while assisting at the fire, had heard that Jenkins and his wife were both very honest, and very pious people; so he told them he would not only pay for their new lodgings, but undertook to raise a little subscription among his friends at the Cat and Bagpipes towards rebuilding their cottage; and farther engaged, that if they would promise to bring up the child in the fear of God, he would stand godfather.

This exercise of Christian charity had given such a cheerful flow to Mr. Trueman's spirits, that long before he got home he had lost every trace of ill-humour.—'Well, Mr. Fantom,' said he gayly, as he opened the door, 'now do tell me how you could possibly refuse going to help me to put out the fire at poor Jenkins's?'—'Because, said Fantom, 'I was engaged, sir, in a far nobler project than putting out a fire in a little thatched cottage. Sir, I was contriving to put out a fire too; a conflagration of a far more dreadful kind—a fire, sir, in the extinction of which universal man is concerned—I was contriving a scheme to extinguish the fires of the inquisition.'—'Why, man, they don't blaze that I know of,' retorted Trueman. 'I own, that of all the abominable engines which the devil ever invented to disgrace religion and plague mankind, that inquisition was the very worst. But I do not believe popery has ventured at these diabolical tricks since the earthquake at Lisbon. so that a bucket of real water, carried to the real fire at Jenkins's cottage, would have done

more good than a wild plan to put out an imaginary flame which no longer burns. And let me tell you, sir, dreadful as that evil was, God can send his judgments on other sins besides superstition; so it behoves us to take heed of the other extreme, or we may have our earthquakes too. 'The hand of God is not shortened,' sir, 'that it cannot destroy, any more than it cannot save. In the meantime, I must repeat it; you and I are rather called upon to serve a neighbour from perishing in the flames of his house, just under our own window, than to write about the fires of the inquisition; which, if fear, or shame, or the restoration of common sense had not already put out, would have hardly received a check from such poor hands as you and I.'

'Sir,' said Fantom, 'Jenkins is an impertinent fellow; and I owe him a grudge, because he says he had rather forfeit the favour of the best master in England than work in my garden on a Sunday. And when I ordered him to read the Age of Reason, instead of going to church, he refused to work for me at all, with some impertinent hint about God and Mammon.'

'Oh, did he so?' said Mr. Trueman. 'Now I *will* stand godfather to his child, and make him a handsome present into the bargain. Indeed, Mr. Fantom, a man must be a philosopher with a vengeance, if when he sees a house on fire, he stays to consider whether the owner has offended him. Oh, Mr. Fantom, I will forgive you still, if you will produce me, out of all your philosophy, such a sentence as 'Love your enemy —do good to them that hate you—if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;' I will give up the blessed Gospel for the Age of Reason, if you will only bring me one sentiment equivalent to this.'

Next day Mr. Trueman was obliged to go to London on business; but returned soon; as the time he had allotted to spend with Mr. Fantom was not yet elapsed. He came down the sooner indeed, that he might bring a small sum of money which the gentlemen at the Cat and Bagpipes had cheerfully subscribed for Jenkins. Trueman did not forget to desire his wife to make up also a quantity of clothing for this poor family, to which he did not neglect to add a parcel of good books, which indeed always made a part of his charities; as he used to say, there was something cruel in the kindness which was anxious to relieve the bodies of men, but was negligent of their souls. He stood in person to the new born child, and observed with much pleasure, that Jenkins and his wife thought a christening, not a season for merry-making, but a solemn act of religion. And they dedicated their infant to his Maker with becoming seriousness.

Trueman left the cottage and got back to Mr. Fantom's, just as the family were going to sit down to dinner, as he had promised.

When they sat down, Mr. Fantom was not a little out of humour to see his table in some disorder. William was also rather more negligent than usual. If the company called for bread, he gave them beer, and he took away the clean plates, and gave them dirty ones. Mr. Fantom soon discovered that his servant was very drunk; he flew into a violent passion, and ordered him out of the room, charging that he should not appear in his presence in that condition. William obeyed; but having slept an hour or two, and got about half sober, he again made his appearance. His master gave him a most severe reprimand, and called him an idle, drunken, vicious fellow. 'Sir,' said William, very pertly, 'If I do get drunk now and then, I only do it for the good of my country, and in obedience to your wishes.' Mr. Fantom, thoroughly provoked, now began to scold him in words not fit to be repeated; and asked him what he meant, 'Why, sir,' said William, 'you are a philosopher you know; and I have often overheard you say to your company, that private vices are public benefits; and so I thought that getting drunk was as pleasant a way of doing good to the public as any, especially when I could oblige my master at the same time.'

'Get out of my house,' said Mr. Fantom, in a great rage. 'I do not desire to stay a moment longer,' said William, 'so pay me my wages.'—'Not I indeed,' replied the master; 'nor will I give you a character; so never let me see your face again.' William took his master at his word, and not only got out of the house, but went out of the country too as fast as possible. When they found he was really gone, they made a hue-and-cry, in order to detain him till they examined if he had left every thing in the house as he had found it. But William had got out of reach, knowing he could not stand such a scrutiny. On examination, Mr. Fantom found that all his old port was gone, and Mrs. Fantom missed three of her best new spoons. William was pursued, but without success; and Mr. Fantom was so much discomposed that he could not for the rest of the day, talk on any subject but his wine and his spoons, nor harangue on any project but that of recovering both by bringing William to justice.

Some days passed away, in which Mr. Fantom, having had time to cool, began to be ashamed that he had been betrayed into such ungoverned passion. He made the best excuse he could; said no man was perfect, and though he owned he had been too violent, yet still he hoped William would be brought to the punishment he deserved. 'In the meantime,' said Mr. Trueman, 'seeing how ill philosophy has agreed with your man, suppose you were to set about teaching your maids a little religion?' Mr. Fantom coolly replied, 'that the impertinent retort of a drunken footman could not spoil a system.'—'Your system, however, and your own behaviour,' said Trueman, 'have made that footman a scoundrel: and you are answerable for his offences.'—'Not I truly,' said Fantom; 'he has seen me do no harm; he has neither seen me cheat, gamble, nor get drunk; and I defy you to say I corrupt my servants. I am a moral man, sir.'

'Mr. Fantom,' said Trueman, 'if you were to get drunk every day, and game every night, you would, indeed, endanger your own soul, and give a dreadful example to your family; but great as those sins are, and God forbid that I should attempt to lessen them! still they are not worse, nay, they are not so bad, as the pestilent doctrines with which you infect your

house and your neighbourhood. A bad action is like a single murder. The consequence may end with the crime, to all but the perpetrator; but a wicked principle is throwing lighted gunpowder into a town; it is poisoning a river; there are no bounds, no certainty, no ends to its mischief. The ill effects of the worst action may cease in time, and the consequences of your bad example may end with your life; but souls may be brought to perdition by a wicked principle after the author of it has been dead for ages.'

Fantom. You talk like an ignoramus, who has never read the new philosophy. All this nonsense of future punishment is now done away. It is *our* benevolence which makes us reject your creed; we can no more believe in a deity who permits so much evil in the present world, than one who threatens eternal punishment in the next.

Trueman. What! shall mortal man be more merciful than God? Do you pretend to be more compassionate than that gracious Father who sent his own Son into the world to die for sinners?

Fantom. You take all your notions of the Deity from the vulgar views your Bible gives you of him. 'To be sure I do,' said Trueman: 'can you tell me any way of getting a better notion of him? I do not want any of your farthing-candle philosophy in the broad sunshine of the Gospel, Mr. Fantom. My Bible tells me that 'God is love;' not merely loving, but LOVE. Now do you think a Being, whose very essence is love, would permit any misery among his children here, if it was not to be, some way or other, or some where or other, for their good? You forget, too, that in a world where there is sin, there must be misery. Then, too, I suppose, God permits this very misery partly to exercise the sufferers and partly to try the prosperous; for by trouble God corrects some and tries others. Suppose now, Tom Saunders had not been put in prison, you and I ————no, I beg pardon, *you* saved your guinea; well then, our club and I could not have shown our kindness in getting him out; nor would poor Saunders himself have had an opportunity of exercising his own patience and submission under want and imprisonment. So you see one reason why God permits misery, is that good men may have an opportunity of lessening it.' Mr. Fantom replied, 'There is no object which I have more at heart; I have, as I told you, a plan in my head of such universal benevolence as to include the happiness of all mankind.'—'Mr. Fantom, said Trueman, 'I feel that I have a general good will to all my brethren of mankind; and if I had as much money in my purse as I have love in my heart, I trust I should prove it: all I say is, that, in a station of life where I cannot do much, I am more called upon to procure the happiness of a poor neighbour, who has no one else to look to, than to form wild plans for the good of mankind, too extensive to be accomplished, and too chimerical to be put in practice. It is the height of folly for a little ignorant tradesman to distract himself with projecting schemes which require the wisdom of scholars, the experience of statesmen, and the power of kings to accomplish. I cannot free whole countries, nor reform the evils of society at large, but I *can* free an aggrieved wretch in a workhouse; I *can* relieve the distresses of one of my journeymen; and I *can* labour to reform myself and my own family.'

Some weeks after this a letter was brought to Mr. Fantom from his late servant William, who had been turned away for drunkenness, as related above, and who had also robbed his master of some wine and some spoons. Mr. Fantom, glancing his eye over the letter, said, 'It is dated from Chelmsford jail; that rascal has got into prison. I am glad of it with all my heart, it is the fittest place for such scoundrels. I hope he will be sent to Botany Bay, if not hanged.'—'O, ho! my good friend,' said Trueman, 'then I find that in abolishing all prisons you would just let one stand for the accommodation of those who would happen to rob *you*. General benevolence, I see, is compatible with particular resentments, though individual kindness is not consistent with universal philanthropy.' Mr. Fantom drily observed, that he was not fond of jokes, and proceeded to read the letter. It expressed an earnest wish that his late master would condescend to pay him one visit in his dark and doleful abode; as he wished to say a few words to him before the dreadful sentence of the law, which had already been pronounced, should be executed.

'Let us go and see the poor fellow,' said Trueman; 'it is but a morning's ride. If he is really so near his end it would be cruel to refuse him.' 'Not I, truly;' said Fantom; 'he deserves nothing at my hands but the halter he is likely to meet with. Such port is not to be had for money! and the spoons, part of my new dozen!'—'As to the wine, said Trueman, 'I am afraid you must give that up, but the only way to get any tidings of the spoons is to go and hear what he has to say; I have no doubt but he will make such a confession as may be very useful to others, which, you know, is one grand advantage of punishments; and, besides, we may afford him some little comfort.' 'As to comfort he deserves none from me,' said Fantom; 'and as to his confessions, they can be of no use to me, but as they give me a chance of getting my spoons; so I do not much care if I do take a ride with you.'

When they came to the prison, Mr. Trueman's tender heart sunk within him. He deplored the corrupt nature of man, which makes such rigorous confinement indispensably needful, not merely for the punishment of the offender, but for the safety of society. Fantom, from mere trick and habit, was just preparing a speech on benevolence, and the cruelty of imprisonment; for he had a set of sentiments collected from the new philosophy which he always kept by him. The naming a man in power brought out the ready cut and dried phrase against oppression. The idea of rank included every vice, that of poverty every virtue; and he was furnished with all the invectives against the cruelty of laws, punishments, and prisons, which the new lexicon has produced. But his mechanical benevolence was suddenly checked; the re-

collection of his old port and his new spoons cooled his ardour, and he went on without saying a word.

When they reached the cell where the unhappy William was confined, they stopped at the door. The poor wretch had thrown himself on the ground, as well as his chains would permit. He groaned piteously; and was so swallowed up with a sense of his own miseries, that he neither heard the door open, nor saw the gentlemen. He was attempting to pray, but in an agony which made his words hardly intelligible. Thus much they could make out—'God be merciful to me a sinner, the chief of sinners!' then, suddenly attempting to start up, but prevented by his irons, he roared out, 'O God! thou canst *not* be merciful to me, for I have denied thee; I have ridiculed my Saviour who died for me; I have broken his laws; I have derided his word; I have resisted his Spirit; I have laughed at that heaven which is shut against me; I have denied the truth of those torments which await me. To-morrow! to-morrow! O for a longer space for repentance! O for a short reprieve from hell!'

Mr. Trueman wept so loud that it drew the attention of the criminal, who now lifted up his eyes, and cast on his late master a look so dreadful that Fantom wished for a moment that he had given up all hope of the spoons, rather than have exposed himself to such a scene. At length the poor wretch said, in a low voice that would have melted a heart of stone, 'O, sir, are you there? I did indeed wish to see you before my dreadful sentence is put in execution. Oh, sir! to-morrow! to-morrow! But I have a confession to make to you. This revived Mr. Fantom, who again ventured to glance a hope at the spoons. 'Sir,' said William, 'I could not die without making my confession.' 'Ay, and restitution too, I hope,' replied Fantom: 'where are my spoons?' 'Sir, they are gone with the rest of my wretched booty. But oh, sir! those spoons make so petty an article in my black account, that I hardly think of them. Murder! sir, murder is the crime for which I am justly doomed to die. Oh, sir, who can abide the anger of an offended God? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' As this was a question which even a philosopher could not answer, Mr. Fantom was going to steal off, especially as he now gave up all hope of the spoons; but William called him back: 'Stay, sir, stay, I conjure you, as you will answer it at the bar of God. You must hear the sins of which you have been the occasion. You are the cause of my being about to suffer a shameful death.—Yes, sir, you made me a drunkard, a thief, and a murderer.' 'How dare you, William,' cried Mr. Fantom, with great emotion, 'accuse me with being the cause of such horrid crimes?' 'Sir,' answered the criminal, 'from you I learned the principles which lead to those crimes. By the grace of God I should never have fallen into sins deserving of the gallows, if I had not overheard you say there was no hereafter, no judgment, no future reckoning. O, sir! there *is* a hell, dreadful, inconceivable, eternal!' Here, through the excess of anguish, the poor fellow fainted away. Mr. Fantom, who did not at all relish this scene, said to his friend, 'well, sir, we will go, if you please, for you see there is nothing to be done.'

'Sir,' replied Mr. Trueman, mournfully, 'you may go if you please, but I shall stay, for I see there is a great deal to be done.'—'What!' rejoined the other, 'do you think it possible his life can be saved.' 'No, indeed,' said Trueman; 'but I hope it possible his soul may be saved.' 'I do not understand these things,' said Fantom, making toward the door. 'Nor I neither,' said Trueman; 'but as a fellow-sinner, I am bound to do what I can for this poor man. Do you go home, Mr. Fantom, and finish your treatise on universal benevolence, and the blessed effects of philosophy; and hark ye, be sure you let the frontispiece of your book represent *William on the gibbet;* that will be what our minister calls a PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION. You know I hate theories: this is *realizing;* this is PHILOSOPHY made easy to the meanest capacity. This is the precious fruit which grows on that darling tree, so many slips of which have been transplanted from that land of liberty of which it is the native, but which, with all your digging, planting, watering, dunging, and dressing, will, I trust, never thrive in this blessed land of ours.'

Mr. Fantom sneaked off to finish his work at home; and Mr. Trueman staid to finish his in the prison. He passed the night with the wretched convict; he prayed with him and for him, and read to him the penitential psalms, and some portions of the Gospel.—But he was too humble and too prudent a man to venture out of his depth by arguments and consolations which he was not warranted to use: this he left for the clergyman—but he pressed on William the great duty of making the only amends now in his power to those whom he had led astray.—They then drew up the following paper, which Mr. Trueman got printed, and gave away at the place of execution.

The last words, confession, and dying speech of WILLIAM WILSON, *who was executed at Chelmsford for murder.*

'I was bred up in the fear of God, and lived with credit in many sober families, in which I was a faithful servant; but being tempted by a little higher wages, I left a good place to go and live with Mr. Fantom, who, however made good none of his fine promises, but proved a hard master. Full of fine words and charitable speeches in favour of the poor; but apt to oppress, overwork, and underpay them. In his service I was not allowed time to go to church. This troubled me at first, till I overheard my master say, that going to church was a superstitious prejudice, and only meant for the vulgar. Upon this I resolved to go no more; for I thought there could not be two religions, one for the master, and one for the servant. Finding my master never prayed, I too left off praying: this gave Satan great power over me, so that I from that time fell into almost every sin. I was very uneasy at first, and my conscience gave me no rest; but I was soon reconciled by overhearing my master and another gentleman say, that death was only an eternal sleep, and hell and judgment were but an invention of priests to keep the poor in order. I mention this as a

warning to all masters and mistresses to take care what they converse about while servants are waiting at table. They cannot tell how many souls they have sent to perdition by such loose talk. The crime for which I die is the natural consequence of the principles I learnt of my master. A rich man, indeed, who throws off religion, may escape the gallows, because want does not drive him to commit those crimes which lead to it; but what shall restrain a needy man, who has been taught that there is no dreadful reckoning? Honesty is but a dream without the awful sanctions of heaven and hell. Virtue is but a shadow, if it be stripped of the terrors and the promises of the Gospel. Morality is but an empty name, if it be destitute of the principle and power of Christianity. Oh, my dear fellow-servants! take warning by my sad fate; never be tempted away from a sober service for the sake of a little more wages: never venture your immortal souls in houses where God is not feared. And now hear me, O, my God, though I have blasphemed thee! forgive me, O my Saviour, though I have denied thee! O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, deliver me from the bitter pains of eternal death, and receive my soul for His sake who died for sinners.

'WILLIAM WILSON.'

Mr. Trueman would never leave this poor penitent till he was launched into eternity, but attended him with the minister in the cart. This pious clergyman never cared to say what he thought of Williams state.—When Mr. Trueman ventured to mention his hope, that though his penitence was late, yet it was sincere, and spoke of the dying thief on the cross as a ground of encouragement, the minister with a very serious look, made this answer: 'Sir, that instance is too often brought forward on occasions to which it does not apply: I do not choose to say any thing to your application of it in the present case, but I will answer you in the words of a good man speaking of the penitent thief: 'There is *one* such instance given that nobody might despair, and there is *but* one, that nobody might presume.'

Poor William was turned off just a quarter before eleven; and may the Lord have mercy on his soul!

THE TWO WEALTHY FARMERS;

OR, THE HISTORY OF MR. BRAGWELL.

IN SEVEN PARTS

PART I.—THE VISIT.

MR. BRAGWELL and Mr. Worthy happened to meet last year at Weyhill fair. They were glad to see each other, as they had but seldom met of late; Mr. Bragwell having removed some years before from Mr. Worthy's neighbourhood, to a distant village, where he had bought an estate.

Mr. Bragwell was a substantial farmer and grazier. He had risen in the world by what worldly men call a run of good fortune. He had also been a man of great industry; that is, he had paid a diligent and constant attention to his own interest. He understood business, and had a knack of turning almost every thing to his own advantage. He had that sort of sense which good men call cunning, and knaves call wisdom. He was too prudent ever to do any thing so wrong that the law could take hold of him; yet he was not over scrupulous about the morality of an action, when the prospect of enriching himself by it was very great, and the chance of hurting his character was small. The corn he sent home to his customers was not always quite so good as the samples he had produced at market; and he now and then forgot to name some capital blemish in the horses he sold at fair. He scorned to be guilty of the petty frauds of cheating in weights and measures, for he thought that was a beggarly sin; but he valued himself on his skill in making a bargain, and fancied it showed his superior knowledge of the world to take advantage of the ignorance of a dealer.

It was his constant rule to undervalue every thing he was about to buy, and to overvalue every thing he was about to sell; but as he seldom lost sight of his discretion, he avoided every thing that was very shameful; so that he was considered merely as a hard dealer, and a keen hand at a bargain. Now and then when he had been caught in pushing his own advantage too far, he contrived to get out of the scrape by turning the whole into a jest, saying it was a good take in, a rare joke, and he had only a mind to divert himself with the folly of his neighbour, who could be so easily imposed on.

Mr. Bragwell, however, in his way, set a high value on character: not indeed that he had a right sense of its worth; he did not consider reputation as desirable because it increases influence, and for that reason strengthens the hands of a good man, and enlarges his sphere of usefulness: but he made the advantage of reputation, as well as of every other good, centre in himself. Had he observed a strict attention to principle, he feared he should not have got on so fast in the world as those do who consult expediency rather than probity, while, without a certain degree of character, he knew also, that he should forfeit that confidence which put other men in his power, and would set them as much on their guard against him, as he, who thought all mankind pretty much alike, was on his guard against them.

Mr. Bragwell had one favourite maxim; namely, that a man's success in life was a sure proof of his wisdom: and that all failure and misfortune was the consequence of a man's own folly. As this opinion was first taken up by him from vanity and ignorance, so it was more

and more confirmed by his own prosperity. He saw that he himself had succeeded greatly without either money or education to begin with; and he therefore now despised every man, however excellent his character or talents might be, who had not the same success in life. His natural disposition was not particularly bad, but prosperity had hardened his heart. He made his own progress in life the rule by which the conduct of all other men was to be judged, without any allowance for their peculiar disadvantages, or the visitations of Providence. He thought, for his part, that every man of sense could command success on his undertakings, and control and dispose the events of his own life.

But though he considered those who had had less success than himself as no better than fools, yet he did not extend this opinion to Mr. Worthy, whom he looked upon not only as a good but a wise man. They had been bred up when children in the same house; but with this difference, that Worthy was the nephew of the master, and Bragwell the son of the servant.

Bragwell's father had been ploughman in the family of Mr. Worthy's uncle, a sensible man, who farmed a small estate of his own, and who having no children, bred up young Worthy as his son, instructed him in the business of husbandry, and at his death left him his estate. The father of Worthy was a pious clergyman, who lived with his brother the farmer, in order to help out a narrow income. He had bestowed much pains on the instruction of his son, and used frequently to repeat to him a saying, which he had picked up in a book written by one of the greatest men this country ever produced—That there were two things with which every man ought to be acquainted, RELIGION AND HIS OWN BUSINESS.—While he therefore took care that his son should be made an excellent farmer, he filled up his leisure hours in improving his mind: so that young Worthy had read more good books, and understood them better, than most men in his station. His reading however had been chiefly confined to husbandry and divinity, the two subjects which were of the most immediate importance to him.

The reader will see by this time that Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy were as likely to be as opposite to each other as two men could well be, who were nearly of the same age and condition, and who were neither of them without credit in the world. Bragwell indeed made far the greater figure; for he liked to *cut a dash*, as he called it. It was his delight to make the ancient gentry of the neighbourhood stare, at seeing a grazier vie with them in show, and exceed them in expense. And while it was the study of Worthy to conform to his station, and to set a good example to those about him, it was the delight of Bragwell to eclipse, in his way of life, men of larger fortune. He did not see how much his vanity raised the envy of his inferiors, the ill-will of his equals, and the contempt of his betters.

His wife was a notable stirring woman, but vain, violent, and ambitious; very ignorant, and very high-minded. She had married Bragwell before he was worth a shilling, and as she had brought him a good deal of money, she thought herself the grand cause of his rising in the world; and thence took occasion to govern him most completely. Whenever he ventured to oppose her, she took care to put him in mind that he owed every thing to her; that had it not been for her, he might still have been stumping after a plough-tail, or serving hogs in old Worthy's farm-yard; but that it was she who had made a gentleman of him. In order to set about making him a gentleman, she had begun by teazing him till he had turned away all his poor relations who worked in the farm: she next drew him off from keeping company with his old acquaintance and at last persuaded him to remove from the place where he had got his money. Poor woman! she had not sense and virtue enough to see how honourable it is for a man to raise himself in the world by fair means, and then to help forward his poor relations and friends; engaging their services by his kindness, and endeavouring to turn his own advancement in life to the best account, that of making it the instrument of assisting those who had a natural claim to his protection.

Mrs. Bragwell was an excellent mistress, according to her own notions of excellence; for no one could say she ever lost an opportunity of scolding a servant, or was ever guilty of the weakness of overlooking a fault. Towards her two daughters her behaviour was far otherwise. In them she could see nothing but perfections, but her extravagant fondness for these girls was full as much owing to pride as to affectation. She was bent on making a family, and having found out that she was too ignorant, and too much trained to the habits of getting money, ever to hope to make a figure herself, she looked to her daughters as the persons who were to raise the family of the Bragwells; and to this hope she foolishly submitted to any drudgery for their sakes, and bore every kind of impertinence from them.

The first wish of her heart was to set them above their neighbours; for she used to say, what was the use of having substance, if her daughters might not carry themselves above girls who had nothing? To do her justice, she herself would be about early and late to see that the business of the house was not neglected. She had been bred to great industry, and continued to work when it was no longer necessary, both from early habit, and the desire of heaping up money for her daughters. Yet her whole notion of gentility was, that it consisted in being rich and idle; and, though she was willing to be a drudge herself, she resolved to make her daughters gentlewomen on this principle. To be well dressed, to eat elegantly, and to do nothing, or nothing of which is of any use, was what she fancied distinguished people in genteel life. And this is too common a notion of a fine education among a certain class; they do not esteem things by their use, but by their show. They estimate the value of their children's education by the money it costs, and not by the knowledge and goodness it bestows. People of this stamp often take a pride in the expense of learning, instead of taking pleasure in the advantages of it. And the silly vanity

of letting others see that they can afford any thing, often sets parents on letting their daughters learn not only things of no use, but things which may be really hurtful in their situation; either by setting them above their proper duties, or by taking up their time in a way inconsistent with them.

Mrs. Bragwell sent her daughters to a boarding-school, where she instructed them to hold up their heads as high as any body; to have more spirit than *to be put upon* by any one; never to be pitiful about money, but rather to show that they could afford to spend with the best; to keep company with the richest and most fashionable girls, in the school, and to make no acquaintance with farmers' daughters.

They came home at the usual age of leaving school, with a large portion of vanity grafted on their native ignorance. The vanity was added, but the ignorance was not taken away. Of religion they could not possibly learn any thing, since none was taught, for at that place Christianity was considered as a part of education which belonged only to charity schools. They went to church indeed once a Sunday, yet effectually to counteract any benefit such an attendance might produce, it was the rule of the school that they should use only French prayer-books; of course, such superficial scholars as the Miss Bragwells would always be literally praying in an unknown tongue; while girls of better capacity and more industry would infallibly be picking out the nominative case, the verb, and participle of a foreign language, in the solemn act of kneeling before the Father of Spirits, 'who searcheth the heart and tryeth the reins.' During the remainder of the Sunday they learnt their worldly tasks, all except actual needle-work, which omission alone mark'd the distinction of Sunday from other days; and the governess being a French Roman Catholic, it became a doubtful point with some people, whether her zeal or her negligence in the article of religion would be most to the advantage of her pupils. Of knowledge the Miss Bragwells had got just enough to laugh at their fond parents' rustic manners and vulgar language, and just enough taste to despise and ridicule every girl who was not as vainly dressed as themselves.

The mother had been comforting herself for the heavy expense of their bringing up, by looking forward to the pleasure of seeing them become fine ladies, and the pride of marrying them above their station; and to this hope she constantly referred in all her conversations with them; assuring them that all her happiness depended on their future elevation.

Their father hoped, with far more judgment, that they would be a comfort to him both in sickness and in health. He had had no learning himself, and could write but poorly, and owed what skill he had in figures to his natural turn of business. He reasonably hoped that his daughters, after all the money he had spent on them, would now write his letters and keep his accounts. And as he was now and then laid up with a fit of the gout, he was enjoying the prospect of having two affectionate children to nurse him, as well as two skilful assistants to relieve him.

When they came home, however, he had the mortification to find, that though he had two smart showy ladies to visit him, he had neither dutiful daughters to nurse him, nor faithful stewards to keep his books, nor prudent children to manage his house. They neither soothed him by their kindness when he was sick, nor helped him by their industry when he was busy. They thought the maid might take care of him in the gout as she did before; for they fancied that nursing was a coarse and servile employment: and as to their skill in cyphering he soon found, to his cost, that though they knew how to *spend* both pounds, shillings, and pence, yet they did not know how so well to cast them up. Indeed it is to be regretted that women in general, especially in the middle class, are so little grounded in so indispensable, solid, and valuable an acquirement as arithmetic.

Mrs. Bragwell being one day very busy in preparing a great dinner for the neighbours, ventured to request her daughters to assist in making the pastry. They asked her with a scornful smile, whether she had sent them to a boarding school to learn to cook; and added, that they supposed she would expect them next to make hasty-puddings for the hay-makers. So saying, they coolly marched off to their music. When the mother found her girls were too polite to be of any use, she would take comfort in observing how her parlour was set out with their fillagree and flowers, their embroidery and cut paper. They spent the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the harpsichord, and the night in reading novels.

With all these fine qualifications it is easy to suppose, that as they despised their sober duties, they no less despised their plain neighbours. When they could not get to a horse-race, a petty-ball, or a strolling play, with some company as idle and as smart as themselves, they were driven for amusement to the circulating library. Jack, the ploughboy, on whom they had now put a livery jacket, was employed half his time in trotting backwards and forwards with the most wretched trash the little neighbouring bookshop could furnish. The choice was often left to Jack, who could not read, but who had general orders to bring all the new things, and a great many of them.

It was a misfortune, that at the school at which they had been bred, and at some others, there was no system of education which had any immediate reference to the station of life to which the girls chiefly belonged. As persons in the middle line, for want of that acquaintance with books, and with life and manners, which the great possess, do not always see the connexion between remote consequences and their causes, the evils of a corrupt and inappropriate system of education do not strike *them* so forcibly; and provided *they can pay for it*, which is made the grand criterion between the fit and the unfit, they are too little disposed to consider the value, or rather the worthlessness, of the thing which is paid for: but literally go on to *give their money for that which is not bread.*

Their subsequent course of reading serves to establish all the errors of their education. In

stead of such books as might help to confirm and strengthen them in all the virtues of their station, in humility, economy, meekness, contentment, self-denial, and industry; the studies now adopted are, by a graft on the old stock, made to grow on the habits acquired at school. Of those novels and plays which are so eagerly devoured by persons of this discription, there is perhaps scarce one which is not founded upon principles which would lead young women of the middle ranks to be discontented with their station. It is *rank*—it is *elegance*—it is *beauty*—it is *sentimental feelings*—it is *sensibility*—it is some needless, or some superficial, or some quality hurtful, even in that fashionable person to whom the author ascribes it, which is the ruling principle. This quality transferred into the heart and the conduct of an illiterate woman in an inferior station, becomes absurdity, becomes sinfulness.

Things were in this state in the family we are describing, or rather growing worse; for idleness and vanity are never at a stand; when these two wealthy farmers, Bragwell and Worthy, met at Weyhill fair, as was said before. After many hearty salutations had passed between them, it was agreed that Mr. Bragwell should spend the next day with his old friend, whose house was not many miles distant. Bragwell invited himself in the following manner: 'We have not had a comfortable day's chat for years,' said he, 'and as I am to look at a drove of lean beasts in your neighbourhood, I will take a bed at your house, and we will pass the evening in debating as we used to do. You know I always loved a bit of an argument, and am not reckoned to make the worst figure at our club: I had not, to be sure, such good learning as you had, because your father was a parson, and you got it for nothing: but I can bear my part pretty well for all that. When any man talks to me about his learning, I ask if it has helped him to get a good estate; if he says no, then I would not give him a rush for it; for of what use is all the learning in the world, if it does not make a man rich? But, as I was saying, I will come and see you to-morrow; but now don't let your wife put herself in a fuss for me: don't alter your own plain way; for I am not proud, I assure you, nor above my old friends; though, I thank God, I am pretty well in the world.'

To all this flourishing speech Mr. Worthy coolly answered, that certainly worldly prosperity ought never to make any man proud, since it is God who giveth strength to get riches, and without his blessing, *'tis in vain to rise up early, and to eat the bread of carefulness.*

About the middle of the next day Mr. Bragwell reached Mr. Worthy's neat and pleasant dwelling. He found every thing in it the reverse of his own. It had not so many ornaments, but it had more comforts. And when he saw his friend's good old-fashioned arm-chair in a warm corner, he gave a sigh to think how his own had been banished to make room for his daughter's piano forte. Instead of made flowers in glass cases, and tea-chests and screens too fine to be used, which he saw at home, and about which he was cautioned, and scolded as often as he came near them: his daughters watching his motions with the same anxiety as they would have watched the motions of a cat in a china shop. Instead of this, I say, he saw some neat shelves of good books for the service of the family, and a small medicine chest for the benefit of the poor.

Mrs. Worthy and her daughters had prepared a plain but neat and good dinner.—The tarts were so excellent, that Bragwell felt a secret kind of regret that his own daughters were too genteel to do any thing so very useful. Indeed he had been always unwilling to believe that any thing which was very proper and very necessary, could be so extremely vulgar and unbecoming as his daughters were always declaring it to be. And his late experience of the little comfort he found at home, inclined him now still more strongly to suspect that things were not so right there as he had been made to suppose. But it was in vain to speak; for his daughters constantly stopped his mouth by a favourite saying of theirs, which equally indicated affectation and vulgarity, that it was better to be out of the world than out of the fashion.

Soon after dinner the women went out to their several employments; and Mr. Worthy being left alone with his guest, the following discourse took place:

Bragwell. You have a couple of sober, pretty looking girls, Worthy; but I wonder they don't tiff off a little more. Why, my girls have as much fat and flour on their heads as would half maintain my reapers in suet pudding.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, in the management of my family, I don't consider what I might afford only, though that is one great point; but I consider also what is needful and becoming in a man of my station; for there are so many useful ways of laying out money, that I feel as if it were a sin to spend one unnecessary shilling.—Having had the blessing of a good education myself, I have been able to give the like advantage to my daughters. One of the best lessons I have taught them is, to know themselves; and one proof that they have learnt this lesson is, that they are not above any of the duties of their station. They read and write well, and when my eyes are bad, they keep my accounts in a very pretty manner. If I had put them to learn what you call *genteel things*, these might either have been of no use to them, and so both time and money thrown away; or they might proved worse than nothing to them by leading them into wrong notions, and wrong company. Though we do not wish them to do the laborious parts of the dairy work, yet they always assist their mother in the management of it. As to their appearance, they are every day nearly as you see them now, and on Sunday they are very neatly dressed, but it is always in a decent and modest way. There are no lappets, fringes, furbelows, and tawdry ornaments; no trains, turbans, and flounces, fluttering about my cheese and butter. And I should feel no vanity, but much mortification, if a stranger seeing farmer Worthy's daughters at church should ask who those fine ladies were.

Bragwell. Now I own I should like to have such a question asked concerning my daugh

ters. I like to make people stare and envy. It makes one feel oneself somebody. I never feel the pleasure of having handsome things so much as when I see they raise curiosity; and enjoy the envy of others as a fresh evidence of my own prosperity. But as to yourself, to be sure, you best know what you can afford; and indeed there is some difference between your daughters and the Miss Bragwells.

Worthy. For my part, before I engage in any expense, I always ask myself these two short questions; First, can I afford it?—Secondly, is it proper for me?

Bragwell. Do you so? Now I own I ask myself but one; for if I find I can afford it, I take care to make it proper for me. If I can pay for a thing, no one has a right to hinder me from having it.

Worthy. Certainly. But a man's own prudence, his love of propriety and sense of duty, ought to prevent him from doing an improper thing, as effectually as if there were somebody to hinder him.

Bragwell. Now, I think a man is a fool who is hindered from having any thing he has a mind to; unless indeed, he is in want of money to pay for it. I am no friend to debt. A poor man must want on.

Worthy. But I hope my children have not learnt to want any thing which is not proper for them. They are very industrious; they attend to business all day, and in the evening they sit down to their work and a good book. I take care that neither their reading nor conversation shall excite any desires or tastes unsuitable to their condition. They have little vanity, because the kind of knowledge they have is of too sober a sort to raise admiration; and from that vanity which attends a little smattering of frivolous accomplishments, I have secured them, by keeping them in total ignorance of all such. I think they live in the fear of God. I trust they are humble and pious, and I am sure they seem cheerful and happy. If I am sick, it is pleasant to see them dispute which shall wait upon me; for they say the maid cannot do it so tenderly as themselves.

This part of the discourse staggered Bragwell. An involuntary tear rushed into his eye. Vain as he was, he could not help feeling what a difference a religious and a worldly education made on the heart, and how much the former regulated even the natural temper. Another thing which surprised him was, that these girls living a life of domestic piety, without any public diversions, should be so very cheerful and happy; while his own daughters, who were never contradicted, and were indulged with continual amusements, were always sullen and ill-tempered. That they who were more humoured should be less grateful, and they who were more amused less happy, disturbed him much. He envied Worthy the tenderness of his children, though he would not own it, but turned it off thus:

Bragwell. But my girls are too smart to make mops of, that is the truth. Though ours is a lonely village, it is wonderful to see how soon they get the fashions. What with the discriptions in the magazines, and the pictures in the pocket-books, they have them in a twinkling, and out-do their patterns all to nothing. I used to take in the Country Journal, because it was useful enough to see how oats went, the time of high water, and the price of stocks. But when my ladies came home, forsooth, I was soon whedled out of that, and forced to take a London paper, that tells a deal about the caps and feathers, and all the trumpery of the quality, and the French dress, and the French undress. When I want to know what hops are a bag, they are snatching the paper to see what violet soap is a pound. And as to the dairy, they never care how cow's milk goes, as long as they can get some stuff which they call milk of roses. Seeing them disputing violently the other day about cream and butter, I thought it a sign they were beginning to care for the farm, till I found it was cold cream for the hands, and jessamine butter for the hair.

Worthy. But do your daughters never read?

Bragwell. Read! I believe they do too. Why our Jack, the plough-boy, spends half his time in going to a shop in our market town, where they let out books to read with marble covers. And they sell paper with all manner of colours on the edges, and gim-cracks, and powder-puffs, and wash-balls, and cards without any pips, and every thing in the world that's genteel and of no use. 'Twas but the other day I met Jack with a basket full of these books; so having some time to spare, I sat down to see a little what they were about.

Worthy. Well, I hope you there found what was likely to improve your daughters, and teach them the true use of time.

Bragwell. O, as to that, you are pretty much out. I could make neither head nor tail of it; it was neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring: it was all about my lord, and sir Harry, and the captain. But I never met with such nonsensical fellows in my life. Their talk was no more like that of my old landlord, who was a lord you know, nor the captain of our fensibles, than chalk is like cheese. I was fairly taken in at first, and began to think I had got hold of a *godly* book; for there was a deal about hope and despair, and death, and heaven, and angels, and torments, and everlasting happiness. But when I got a little on, I found there was no meaning in all these words, or if any, it was a bad meaning. Eternal misery, perhaps, only meant a moment's disappointment about a bit of a letter; and everlasting happiness meant two people talking nonsense together for five minutes. In short, I never met with such a pack of lies. The people talk such wild gibberish as no folks in their sober senses ever did talk; and the things that happen to them are not like the things that ever happen to me or any of my acquaintance. They are at home one minute, and beyond sea the next: beggars to-day, and lords to-morrow; waiting maids in the morning, and dutchesses at night. Nothing happens in a natural gradual way, as it does at home; they grow rich by the stroke of a wand, and poor by the magic of a word; the disinherited orphan of this hour is the overgrown heir of the next: now a bride and bridegroom turn out to be brother and sister, and the brother and sister prove to be no

relations at all. You and I, master Worthy, have worked hard many years, and think it very well to have scraped a trifle of money together; you, a few hundreds I suppose, and I a few thousands. But one would think every man in these books had the bank of England in his 'scrutoire. Then there is another thing which I never met with in true life. We think it pretty well, you know, if one has got one thing, and another has got another. I will tell you how I mean. You are reckoned sensible, our parson is learned, the squire is rich, I am rather generous, one of your daughters is pretty, and both mine are genteel. But in these books (except here and there one, whom they make worse than Satan himself) every man and woman's child of them, are all wise, and witty, and generous, and rich, and handsome, and genteel; and all to the last degree. Nobody is middling, or good in one thing, and bad in another, like my live acquaintance; but it is all up to the skies, or down to the dirt. I had rather read Tom Hickathrift, or Jack the giant Killer, a thousand times.

Worthy. You have found out, Mr. Bragwell, that many of these books are ridiculous; I will go farther, and say, that to me they appear wicked also: and I should account the reading of them a great mischief, especially to people in middling and low life, if I only took into the account the great loss of time such reading causes, and the aversion it leaves behind for what is more serious and solid. But this, though a bad part, is not the worst. These books give false views of human life. They teach a contempt for humble and domestic duties; for industry, frugality, and retirement. Want of youth and beauty is considered in them as ridiculous. Plain people, like you and me, are objects of contempt. Parental authority is set at naught. Nay, plots and contrivances against parents and guardians, fill half the volumes. They consider love as the great business of human life, and even teach that it is impossible for this love to be regulated or restrained; and to the indulgence of this passion every duty is therefore sacrificed. A country life, with a kind mother or a sober aunt, is described as a state of intolerable misery: and one would be apt to fancy from their painting, that a good country house is a prison, and a worthy father the jailor. Vice is set off with every ornament which can make it pleasing and amiable; while virtue and piety are made ridiculous, by tacking to them something that is silly or absurd. Crimes which would be considered as hanging matter at our county assizes—at least if I were a juryman, I should bring in the whole train of heroes, *Guilty—Death*—are here made to the appearance of virtue, by being mixed with some wild flight of unnatural generosity. Those crying sins, ADULTERY, GAMING, DUELS, and SELF-MURDER, are made so familiar, and the wickedness of them is so disguised by fine words and soft descriptions, that even innocent girls get loose to their abhorrence, and talk with complacency, of *things which should not be so much as named by them.*

I should not have said so much on this mischief (continued Mr. Worthy) from which I dare say, great folks fancy people in our station are safe enough, if I do not know and lament that this corrupt reading is now got down even among some of the lowest class. And it is an evil which is spreading every day. Poor industrious girls, who get their bread by the needle or the loom, spend half the night in listening to these books. Thus the labour of one girl is lost, and the minds of the rest are corrupted; for though their hands are employed in honest industry, which might help to preserve them from a life of sin, yet their hearts are at the very time polluted by scenes and descriptions which are too likely to plunge them into it: and when their vain weak heads compare the soft and delicious lives of the heroines in the book, with their own mean garb and hard labour, the effect is obvious; and I think I do not go too far when I say, that the vain and showy manner in which young women, who have to work for their bread, have taken to dress themselves, added to the poison they draw from these books, contribute together to bring them to destruction, more than almost any other cause. Now tell me, do not you think these wild books will hurt your daughters?

Bragwell. Why I do think they are grown full of schemes, and contrivances and whispers, that's the truth on't. Every thing is a secret. They always seem to be on the look-out for something, and when nothing comes on't, then they are sulky and disappointed. They will keep company with their equals: they despise trade and farming; and I own *I'm for the stuff.* I should not like them to marry any but a man of substance, if he was ever so smart. Now they will hardly sit down with a substantial country dealer. But if they hear of a recruiting party in our market-town, on goes the finery—off they are. Some flimsy excuse is patched up. They want something at the book-shop or the milliner's; because I suppose there is a chance for some Jack-a-napes of an ensign may be there buying sticking-plaster. In short, I do grow a little uneasy; for I should not like to see all I have saved thrown away on a knapsack.

So saying, they both rose and walked out to view the farm. Mr. Bragwell affected greatly to admire the good order of every thing he saw; but never forgot to compare it with something larger, and handsomer, or better of his own. It was easy to see that *self* was his standard of perfection in every thing. All he himself possessed gained some increased value in his eyes from being his; and in surveying the property of his friend, he derived food for his vanity, from things which seemed least likely to raise it. Every appearance of comfort, of success of merit, in any thing which belonged to Mr. Worthy led him to speak of some superior advantage of his own of the same kind: and it was clear that the chief part of the satisfaction he felt in walking over the farm of his friend, was caused by thinking how much larger his own was.

Mr. Worthy, who felt a kindness for him, which all his vanity could not cure, was always on the watch how to turn their talk on some useful point. And whenever people resolve to go into company with this view, it is commonly their own fault, if some opportunity of turning it to account does not offer.

He saw Bragwell was intoxicated with pride, and undone by success; and that his family was in the high road to ruin through mere prosperity. He thought that if some means could be found to open his eyes on his own character, to which he was now totally blind, it might be of the utmost service to him. The more Mr. Worthy reflected, the more he wished to undertake this kind office. He was not sure that Mr. Bragwell would bear it, but he was very sure it was his duty to attempt it. As Mr. Worthy was very humble himself, he had great patience and forbearance with the faults of others. He felt no pride at having escaped the errors into which they had fallen, for he knew who it was had *made him to differ*. He remembered that God had given him many advantages; a pious father and a religious education: this made him humble under a sense of his own sins, and charitable towards the sins of others, who had not the same privileges.

Just as he was going to try to enter into a very serious conversation with his guest, he was stopped by the appearance of his daughter, who told them supper was ready.—This interruption obliges me to break off also, and I shall reserve what follows to the next month, when I promise to give my readers the second part of this history.

PART II.

A CONVERSATION.

Soon after supper Mrs. Worthy left the room with her daughters, at her husband's desire; for it was his intention to speak more plainly to Bragwell than was likely to be agreeable to him to hear before others. The two farmers being seated at their little table, each in a handsome old-fashioned great chair, Bragwell began.

'It is a great comfort neighbour Worthy, at a certain time of life to be got above the world: my notion is, that a man should labour hard the first part of his days, that he may then sit down and enjoy himself the remainder. Now, though I hate boasting, yet as you are my oldest friend, I am about to open my heart to you. Let me tell you then I reckon I have worked as hard as any man in my time, and that I now begin to think I have a right to indulge a little. I have got my money with character, and I mean to spend it with credit. I pay every one his own, I set a good example, I keep to my church, I serve God, I honour the king, and I obey the laws of the land.'

'This is doing a great deal indeed,' replied Mr. Worthy: 'but,' added he, 'I doubt that more goes to the making up all these duties than men are commonly aware of. Suppose then that you and I talk the matter over coolly; we have the evening before us.—What if we sit down together as two friends and examine one another.'

Bragwell, who loved argument, and who was not a little vain both of his sense and his morality, accepted the challenge, and gave his word that he would take in good part any thing that should be said to him.—Worthy was about to proceed, when Bragwell interrupted him for a moment, by saying—'But stop, friend, before we begin I wish you would remember that we have had a long walk, and I want a little refreshment; have you no liquor that is stronger than this cider? I am afraid it will give me a fit of the gout.'

Mr. Worthy immediately produced a bottle of wine, and another of spirits; saying, that though he drank neither spirits nor even wine himself, yet his wife always kept a little of each as a provision in case of sickness or accidents.

Farmer Bragwell preferred the brandy, and began to taste it. 'Why,' said he, 'this is no better than English; I always use foreign myself.'—'I bought this for foreign,' said Mr. Worthy.—'No, no, it is English spirits I assure you; but I can put you into a way to get foreign nearly as cheap as English.' Mr. Worthy replied that he thought that was impossible.

Bragwell. O no; there are ways and means—a word to the wise—there is an acquaintance of mine that lives upon the south coast—you are a particular friend and I will get you half-a-dozen gallons for a trifle.

Worthy. Not if it be smuggled, Mr. Bragwell, though I should get it for sixpence a bottle.—'Ask no questions,' said the other, 'I never say any thing to any one, and who is the wiser?'—'And so this is your way of obeying the laws of the land,' said Mr. Worthy—'here is a fine specimen of your morality.'

Bragwell. Come, come, don't make a fuss about trifles. If *every one* did it indeed it would be another thing; but as to *my* getting a little good brandy cheap, why that can't hurt the revenue much.

Worthy. Pray Mr. Bragwell what should you think of a man who would dip his hand into a bag and take out a few guineas?

Bragwell. Think? why I think that he should be hanged to be sure.

Worthy. But suppose that bag stood in the king's treasury?

Bragwell. In the king's treasury! worse and worse! What, rob the king's treasury! Well, I hope if any one has done it, the robber will be taken up and executed; for I suppose we shall all be taxed to pay the damage.

Worthy. Very true. If one man takes money out of the treasury, others must be obliged to pay the more into it. But what think you if the fellow should be found to have stopped some money *in its way* to the treasury, instead of taking it out of the bag after it got there?

Bragwell. Guilty, Mr. Worthy; it is all the same, in my opinion. If I were judge I would hang him without benefit of clergy.

Worthy. Hark ye, Mr. Bragwell, he that deals in smuggled brandy is the man who takes to himself the king's money in its way to the treasury, and he as much robs the government as if he dipt his hands into a bag of guineas in the treasury chamber. It comes to the same thing exactly. Here Bragwell seemed a little offended, and exclaimed—'What, Mr. Worthy! do you pretend to say I am not an honest man because I like to get my brandy as cheap as I can? and because I like to save a shilling to my family? Sir, I repeat it; I do my duty to God

and my neighbour. I say the Lord's prayer most days, I go to church on Sundays, I repeat my creed, and keep the ten commandments; and though I now and then get a little brandy cheap, yet upon the whole, I will venture to say, I do as much as can be expected of any man, and more than the generality.'

Worthy. Come then since you say you keep the commandments, you cannot be offended if I ask you whether you understand them.

Bragwell. To be sure I do. I dare say I do: look'ye, Mr. Worthy, I don't pretend to much reading, I was not bred to it as you were. If my father had been a parson, I fancy I should have made as good a figure as some other folks, but I hope good sense and *a good heart* may teach a man his duty without much scholarship.

Worthy. To come to the point; let us now go through the ten commandments, and let us take along with us those explanations of them which our Saviour gave us in his sermon on the mount.

Bragwell. Sermon on the mount! why the ten commandments are in the 20th chapter of Exodus. Come, come, Mr. Worthy, I know where to find the commandments as well as you do; for it happens that I am church-warden, and I can see from the altar-piece where the ten commandments are, without your telling me, for my pew directly faces it.

Worthy. But I advise you to read the sermon on the mount, that you may see the full meaning of them.

Bragwell. What! do you want to make me believe there are two ways of keeping the commandments?

Worthy. No; but there may be two ways of understanding them.

Bragwell. Well, I am not afraid to be put to the proof; I defy any man to say I do not keep at least all the four first that are on the left side of the altar-piece.

Worthy. If you can prove that, I shall be more ready to believe you observe those of the other table; for he who does his duty to God, will be likely to do his duty to his neighbour also.

Bragwell. What! do you think that I serve two Gods? Do you think then that I make graven images, and worship stocks or stones? Do you take me for a papist or an idolater?

Worthy. Don't triumph quite so soon, master Bragwell. Pray is there nothing in the world you prefer to God, and thus make an idol of? Do you not love your money, or your lands, or your crops, or your cattle, or your own will, or your own way, rather better than you love God? Do you never think of these with more pleasure than you think of him, and follow them more eagerly than your religious duty?

Bragwell. O! there's nothing about that in the 20th chapter of Exodus.

Worthy. But Jesus Christ has said, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' Now it is certainly a man's duty to love his father and his mother; nay, it would be wicked not to love them, and yet we must not love even these more than our Creator and our Saviour. Well, I think on this principle, your heart pleads guilty to the breach of the first and second commandments; let us proceed to the third.

Bragwell. That is about swearing, is it not?

Mr. Worthy, who had observed Bragwell guilty of much profaneness in using the name of his Maker, (though all such offensive words have been avoided in writing this history) now told him that he had been waiting the whole day for an opportunity to reprove him for his frequent breach of the third commandment.

'Good L—d! I break the third commandment!' said Bragwell; 'no indeed, hardly ever, I once used to swear a little to be sure, but I vow I never do it now, except now and then when I happen to be in a passion: and in such a case, why, good G—d, you know the sin is with those who provoke me, and not with me; but, upon my soul, I don't think I have sworn an oath these three months, no not I, faith, as I hope to be saved.'

Worthy. And yet you have broken this holy law not less than five or six times in the last speech you have made.

Bragwell. Lord bless me! Sure you mistake. Good heavens, Mr. Worthy, I call G—d to witness, I have neither cursed nor swore since I have been in the house.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, this is the way in which many who call themselves very good sort of people deceive themselves. What! is it no profanation of the name of your Maker to use it lightly, irreverently and familiarly as you have done? Our Saviour has not only told us not to swear by the immediate name of God, but he has said, 'swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth,' and in order to hinder our inventing any other irreligious exclamations or expressions, he has even added, 'but let your communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than this simple affirmation and denial cometh of evil.' Nay more, so greatly do I reverence that high and holy name, that I think even some good people have it too frequently in their mouths; and that they might convey the idea without the word.

Bragwell. Well, well, I must take a little more care, I believe. I vow to heaven I did not know there had been so much harm in it; but my daughters seldom speak without using some of these words, and yet they wanted to make me believe the other day that it was monstrous vulgar to swear.

Worthy. Women, even gentlewomen, who ought to correct this evil habit in their fathers, and husbands, and children, are too apt to encourage it by their own practice. And indeed they betray the profaneness of their own minds also by it; for none who venerate the holy name of God, can either profane it in this manner themselves, or hear others do so without being exceedingly pained at it.

Bragwell. Well, since you are so hard upon me, I believe I must e'en give up this point—so let us pass on to the next, and here I tread upon sure ground; for as sharp as you are upon me, you can't accuse me of being a Sabbath breaker, since I go to church every Sunday of my life, unless on some very extraordinary occasion.

Worthy. For those occasions the Gospel allows, by saying, 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' Our own

sickness. or attending on the sickness of others, are lawful impediments.

Bragwell. Yes, and I am now and then obliged to look at a drove of beasts, or to go a journey, or take some medicine, or perhaps some friend may call upon me, or it may be very cold, or very hot, or very rainy.

Worthy. Poor excuses! Mr. Bragwell. Do you call these lawful impediments? I am afraid they will not pass for such on the day of judgment. But how is the rest of your Sunday spent?

Bragwell. O why, I assure you I often go to church in the afternoon also, and even if I am ever so sleepy.

Worthy. And so you finish your nap at church, I suppose.

Bragwell. Why as to that, to be sure we do contrive to have something a little nicer than common for dinner on a Sunday: in consequence of which one eats, you know a little more than ordinary; and having nothing to do on that day, has more leisure to take a cheerful glass; and all these things will make one a little heavy you know.

Worthy. And don't you take a little ride in the morning, and look at your sheep when the weather is good; and so fill your mind just before you go to church with thoughts of them; and when the weather is bad, don't you settle an account? or write a few letters of business after church?

Bragwell. I can't say but I do; but that is nothing to any body, as long as I set a good example by keeping to my church.

Worthy. And how do you pass your Sunday evenings?

Bragwell. My wife and daughters go a visiting Sunday afternoons. My daughters are glad to get out at any rate; and as to my wife, she says that being ready dressed, it is a pity to lose the opportunity: besides, it saves her time on a weak day; so then you see I have it all my own way, and when I have got rid of the ladies, who are ready to faint at the smell of tobacco, I can venture to smoke a pipe, and drink a sober glass of punch with half a dozen friends.

Worthy. Which punch being made of smuggled brandy, and drunk on the Lord's-day, and very vain, as well as profane and worldly company, you are enabled to break both the law of God, and that of your country at a stroke: and I suppose when you are got together, you speak of your cattle, or of your crops, after which perhaps you talk over a few of your neighbours' faults, and then you brag a little of your own wealth or your own achievements.

Bragwell. Why you seem to know us so well, that any one would think you had been sitting behind the curtain; and yet you are a little mistaken too; for I think we have hardly said a word for several of our last Sundays on any thing but politics.

Worthy. And do you find that you much improve your Christian charity by that subject?

Bragwell. Why to be sure we do quarrel till we are very near fighting, that is the worst on't.

Worthy. And then you call names, and swear a little I suppose.

Bragwell. Why when one is contradicted and put in a passion you know, and when people, especially if they are one's inferiors, won't adopt all one's opinions, flesh and blood can't bear it.

Worthy. And when all your friends are gone home, what becomes of the rest of the evening?

Bragwell. That is just as it happens, sometimes I read the newspaper; and as one is generally most tired on the days one does nothing, I go to bed earlier on Sundays than on other days, that I may be more fit to get up to my business the next morning.

Worthy. So you shorten Sunday as much as you can, by cutting off a bit at both ends, I suppose; for I take it for granted, you lie a little later in the morning.

Bragwell. Come, come, we shan't get through the whole ten to-night, if you stand snubbing one at this rate. You may pass over the fifth; for my father and mother have been dead ever since I was a boy, so I am clear of that scrape.

Worthy. There are, however, many relative duties included in that commandment; unkindness to all kindred is forbidden.

Bragwell. O, if you mean my turning off my nephew Tom, the ploughboy, you must not blame me for that, it was all my wife's fault. He was as good a lad as ever lived to be sure, and my own brother's son; but my wife could not bear that a boy in a carter's frock should be about the house, calling her aunt. We quarrelled like dog and cat about it; and when he was turned away she and I did not speak for a week.

Worthy. Which was a fresh breach of the commandment; a worthy nephew turned out of doors, and a wife not spoken to for a week, are no very convincing proofs of your observance of the fifth commandment.

Bragwell. Well, I long to come to the sixth; for you don't think I commit murder I hope.

Worthy. I am not sure of that.

Bragwell. Murder! what, I kill any body?

Worthy. Why, the laws of the land, indeed, and the disgrace attending it, are almost enough to keep any man from actual murder; let me ask, however, do you never give way to unjust anger, and passion, and revenge? as for instance, do you never feel your resentment kindle against some of the politicians who contradict you on a Sunday night? and do you never push your animosity against somebody that has affronted you, further than the occasion can justify?

Bragwell. Hark'ee, Mr. Worthy, I am a man of substance, and no man shall offend me without my being even with him. So as to injuring a man, if he affronts me first, there's nothing but good reason in that.

Worthy. Very well! only bear in mind that you wilfully break this commandment, whether you abuse your servant, are angry at your wife, watch for a moment to revenge an injury on your neighbour, or even wreak your passion on a harmless beast; for you have then the seeds of murder working in your breast; and if there were no law, no gibbet, to check you, and no fear of disgrace neither, I am not sure where you would stop.

Bragwell. Why, Mr. Worthy, you have a strange way of explaining the commandments;

so you set me down for a murderer, merely because I bear hatred to a man who has done me a hurt, and am glad to do him a like injury in my turn.—I am sure I should want spirit if I did not.

Worthy. I go by the Scripture rule, which says, 'he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and again, 'pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' Besides, Mr. Bragwell, you made it a part of your boast that you said the Lord's prayer every day, wherein you pray to God to forgive you your trespasses as you forgive them that trespass against you.—If therefore you do not forgive them that trespass against you, in that case you daily pray that your own trespasses may never be forgiven.—Now own the truth; did you last night lie down in a spirit of forgiveness and charity with the whole world!

Bragwell. Yes, I am in charity with the whole world in general; because the greater part of it has never done me any harm. But I won't forgive old Giles, who broke down my new hedge yesterday for firing.—Giles who used to be so honest!

Worthy. And yet you expect that God will forgive you who have broken down his sacred laws, and have so often robbed him of his right—you have robbed him of the honour due unto his name—you have robbed him of his holy day by doing your own work, and finding your own pleasure in it—you have robbed his poor, particularly in the instance of Giles, by withholding from them, as overseer, such assistance as should prevent their being driven to the sin of stealing.

Bragwell. Why, you are now charging me with other men's sins as well as my own.

Worthy. Perhaps the sins which we cause other men to commit, through injustice, inconsideration, and evil example, may dreadfully swell the sum of our responsibility in the great day of account.

Bragwell. Well, come let us make haste and get through these commandments. The next is, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Thank God, neither I nor my family can be said to break the seventh commandment.

Worthy. Here again, remember how Christ himself hath said, 'whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.' These are no far-fetched expressions of mine, Mr. Bragwell, they are the words of Jesus Christ. I hope you will not charge him with having carried things too far; for if you do, you charge him with being mistaken in the religion he taught; and this can only be accounted for, by supposing him an impostor.

Bragwell. Why, upon my word, Mr. Worthy, I don't like these sayings of his which you quote upon me so often, and that is the truth of it, and I can't say I feel much disposed to believe them.

Worthy. I hope you believe in Jesus Christ. I hope you believe that creed of your's, which you also boasted of repeating so regularly.

Bragwell. Well, well, I'll believe any thing you say, rather than stand quarrelling with you.

Worthy. I hope then, you will allow, that since it is adultery to look at a woman with even an irregular thought, it follows from the same rule, that all immodest dress in your daughters, or indecent jests and double meanings in yourself; all loose songs or novels; and all diversions also which have a like dangerous tendency, are forbidden by the seventh commandment; for it is most plain from what Christ has said, that it takes in not only the act, but the inclination, the desire, the indulged imagination; the act is only the last and highest degree of any sin; the topmost round, as it were, of a ladder, to which all the lower rounds are only as so many steps and stages.

Bragwell. Strict indeed! Mr. Worthy; but let us go on to the next; you won't pretend to say *I steal*; Mr. Bragwell, I trust, was never known to rob on the highway, to break open his neighbour's house, or to use false weights or measures.

Worthy. No, nor have you ever been under any temptation to do it, and yet there are a thousand ways of breaking the eighth commandment besides actual stealing. For instance do you never hide the faults of the goods you sell, and heighten the faults of those you buy? Do you never take advantage of an ignorant dealer, and ask more for a thing than it is worth? Do you never turn the distressed circumstances of a man who has something to sell, to your own unfair benefit; and thus act as unjustly by him as if you had stolen? Do you never cut off a shilling from a workman's wages, under the pretence which your conscience can't justify? Do you never pass off an unsound horse for a sound one? Do you never conceal the real rent of your estate from the overseers, and thereby rob the poor-rates of their legal due?

Bragwell. Pooh! these things are done every day. I shan't go to set up for being better than my neighbours in these sort of things; these little matters will pass muster—I don't set up for a reformer—If I am as good as the rest of my neighbours, no man can call me to account, I am not worse, I trust, and don't pretend to be better.

Worthy. You must be tried hereafter at the bar of God, and not by a jury of your fellow creatures; and the Scriptures are given us, in order to show by what rule we shall be judged. How many or how few do as you do, is quite aside from the question; Jesus Christ has even told us to strive to enter in the *strait* gate; so that we ought rather to take fright, from our being like the common run of people, than to take comfort from our being so.

Bragwell. Come, I don't like all this close work—it makes a man feel I don't know how—I don't find myself so happy as I did—I don't like this fishing in troubled waters—I'm as merry as the day is long when I let these things alone.—I'm glad we are got to the ninth. But I suppose I shall be lugged in there too, head and shoulders. Any one now who did not know me, would really think I was a great sinner, by your way of putting things: I don't bear false witness however.

Worthy. You mean, I suppose, you would not swear away any man's life falsely before a magistrate, but do you take equal care not to

slander or backbite him? Do you never represent a good action of a man you have quarrelled with, as if it were a bad one? or do you never make a bad one worse than it is, by your manner of telling it? Even when you invent no false circumstances, do you never give such a colour to those you relate, as to leave a false impression on the mind of the hearers? Do you never twist a story so as to make it tell a little better for yourself, and a little worse for your neighbour, than truth and justice warrant?

Bragwell. Why, as to that matter, all this is only natural.

Worthy. Ay, much too natural to be right, I doubt. Well, now we are got to the last of the commandments.

Bragwell. Yes, I have run the gauntlet finely through them all; you will bring me in guilty here, I suppose, for the pleasure of going through with it; for you condemn without judge or jury, master Worthy.

Worthy. The culprit, I think has hitherto pleaded guilty to the evidence brought against him. The tenth commandment, however, goes to the root and principle of evil, it dives to the bottom of things; this command checks the first rising of sin in the heart; teaches us to strangle it in the birth, as it were, before it breaks out in those acts which are forbidden: as, for instance, every man covets before he proceeds to steal; nay, many covet, knowing they can do it with impunity, who dare not steal, lest they should suffer for it.

Bragwell. Why, look'ee, Mr. Worthy, I don't understand these new fashioned explanations; one should not have a grain of sheer goodness left, if every thing one does is to be fritted away at this rate. I am not, I own, quite so good as I thought, but if what you say were true, I should be so miserable, I should not know what to do with myself.—Why, I tell you, all the world may be said to break the commandments at this rate.

Worthy. Very true. All the world, and I myself also, are but too apt to break them, if not in the letter, at least in the spirit of them. Why then all the world are (as the Scripture expresses it) 'guilty before God.' And if guilty, they should own they are guilty, and not stand up and justify themselves, as you do, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Well, according to my notion, I am a very honest man, and honesty is the sum and substance of all religion, say I.

Worthy. All truth, honesty, justice, order, and obedience grow out of the Christian religion. The true Christian acts, at all times, and on all occasions, from the pure and spiritual principle of love to God and Christ.—On this principle, he is upright in his dealings, true to his word, kind to the poor, helpful to the oppressed. In short, if he truly loves God, he *must* do justice, and *can't help* loving mercy. Christianity is a uniform consistent thing. It does not allow us to make up for the breach of one part of God's law, by our strictness in observing another. There is no sponge in one duty, that can wipe out the spot of another sin.

Bragwell. Well, but at this rate, I should be always puzzling and blundering, and should never know for certain whether I was right or not; whereas I am now quite satisfied with myself, and have no doubts to torment me.

Worthy. One way of knowing whether we really desire to obey the whole law of God is this; when we find we have as great a regard to that part of it, the breach of which does not touch our own interest, as to that part which does. For instance, a man robs me; I am in a violent passion with him, and when it is said to me, doest thou well to be angry? I answer, I do well. *Thou shalt not steal* is a law of God, and this fellow has broken that law. Ay, but says conscience, 'tis *thy own property* which is in question. He has broken *thy* hedge, he has stolen *thy* sheep, he has taken *thy* purse.—Art thou therefore sure whether it is his violation of thy property, or of God's law which provokes thee? I will put a second case: I hear another swear most grievously—or I meet him coming drunk out of an ale-house; or I find him singing a loose, profane song. If I am not as much grieved for this blasphemer, or this drunkard, as I was for this robber; if I do not take the same pains to bring him to a sense of his sin, which I did to bring the robber to justice, 'how dwelleth the love of God in me?' Is it not clear that I value my own sheep more than God's commandments? That I prize my purse more than I love my Maker? In short, whenever I find out that I am more jealous for my own property than for God's law; more careful about my own reputation than *his* honour, I always suspect I am got upon wrong ground, and that even my right actions are not proceeding from a right principle.

Bragwell. Why, what in the world would you have me do? It would distract me, if I must run up every little action to its spring, in this manner.

Worthy. You must confess that your sins *are* sins.—You must not merely call them sins, while you see no guilt in them; but you must confess them so as to hate and detest them; so as to be habitually humbled under the sense of them; so as to trust for salvation not in your freedom from them, but in the mercy of a Saviour; and so as to make it the chief business of your life to contend against them, and in the main to forsake them. And remember, that if you seek for a deceitful gayety, rather than a well grounded cheerfulness; if you prefer a false security to final safety, and now go away to your cattle and your farm, and dismiss the subject from your thoughts, lest it should make you uneasy, I am not sure that this simple discourse may not appear against you at the day of account, as a fresh proof that you 'loved darkness rather than light,' and so increase your condemnation.

Mr. Bragwell was more affected than he cared to own. He went to bed with less spirits and more humility than usual. He did not, however, care to let Mr. Worthy see the impression which it had made upon him; but at parting next morning, he shook him by the hand more cordially than usual, and made him promise to return his visit in a short time.

What befel Mr. Bragwell and his family on

his going home may, perhaps, make the subject of a future part of this history.

PART III.

THE VISIT RETURNED.

Mr. Bragwell, when he returned home from his visit to Mr. Worthy, as recorded in the second part of this history, found that he was not quite so happy as he had formerly been. The discourses of Mr. Worthy had broken in not a little on his comfort. And he began to suspect that he was not so completely in the right as his vanity had led him to believe. He seemed also to feel less satisfaction in the idle gentility of his own daughters, since he had been witness to the simplicity, modesty, and usefulness of those of Mr. Worthy. And he could not help seeing that the vulgar violence of his wife did not produce so much family happiness at home, as the humble piety and quiet diligence of Mrs. Worthy produced in the house of his friend.

Happy would it have been for Mr. Bragwell, if he had followed up those new convictions of his own mind, which would have led him to struggle against the power of evil principles in himself, and to have controlled the force of evil habits in his family. But his convictions were just strong enough to make him uneasy under his errors, without driving him to reform them. The slight impression soon wore off, and he fell back into his old practices. Still his esteem for Mr. Worthy was not at all abated by the plain dealing of that honest friend. It is true, he dreaded his piercing eye: he felt that his example held out a constant reproof to himself. Yet such is the force of early affection and rooted reverence, that he longed to see him at his house. This desire, indeed, as is commonly the case, was made up of mixed motives. He wished for the pleasure of his friend's company; he longed for that favourite triumph of a vulgar mind, an opportunity of showing him his riches; and he thought it would raise his credit in the world to have a man of Mr. Worthy's character at his house.

Mr. Bragwell, it is true, still went on with the same eagerness in gaining money, and the same ostentation in spending it. But though he was as covetous as ever, he was not quite so sure that it was right to be so. While he was actually engaged abroad indeed, in transactions with his dealers, he was not very scrupulous about the means by which he *got* his money; and while he was indulging in festivity with his friends at home, he was easy enough as to the manner in which he *spent* it. But a man can neither be making bargains, nor making feasts always; there must be some intervals between these two great objects for which worldly men may be said to live; and in some of these intervals the most worldly form, perhaps, some random plans of amendment. And though many a one may say in the fulness of enjoyment, 'soul take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;' yet hardly any man, perhaps, allows himself to say, even in the most secret moments, I will *never* retire from business—I will *never* repent—I will *never* think of death—Eternity shall *never* come into my thoughts. The most that such a one probably ventures to say is, I need not repent *yet*; I will continue such a sin a little longer; it will be time enough to think on the next world when I am no longer fit for the business or the pleasures of this.

Such was the case with Bragwell. He set up in his mind a general distant sort of resolution, that *some years hence*, when he should be a *few years older*, a *few* thousands richer; when a few more of his *present schemes should be completed*, he would then think of altering his course of life. He would then certainly set about spending a religious old age; he would reform some practices in his dealings, or, perhaps, quit business entirely; he would think about reading good books, and when he had completed such a purchase, he would even begin to give something to the poor; but at present he really had little to spare for charity. The very reason why he should have given more was just the cause he assigned for not giving at all, namely the *hardness of the times*. The true grand source of charity, self-denial, never come into his head. *Spend less* that you may *save* more, he would have thought a shrewd maxim enough. But *spend less* that you may *spare more*, never entered into his book of Proverbs.

At length the time came when Mr. Worthy had promised to return his visit. It was indeed a little hastened by notice that Mr. Bragwell would have in the course of the week, a piece of land to sell by auction; and though Mr. Worthy believed the price was likely to be above his pocket, yet he knew it was an occasion which would be likely to bring the principal farmers of that neighbourhood together, some of whom he wanted to meet. And it was on this occasion that Mr. Bragwell prided himself, that he should show his neighbours so sensible a man as his dear friend Mr. Worthy.

Worthy arrived at his friend's house on the Saturday, time enough to see the house, and garden, and grounds of Mr. Bragwell by daylight. He saw with pleasure (for he had a warm and generous heart) those evident signs of his friend's prosperity; but as he was a man of sober mind, and was a most exact dealer in truth, he never allowed his tongue the license of immodest commendation, which he used to say either savoured of flattery or envy. Indeed he never rated mere worldly things so highly as to bestow upon them undue praise. His calm approbation somewhat disappointed the vanity of Mr. Bragwell, who could not help secretly suspecting that his friend, as good a man as he was, was not quite free from envy. He felt, however, very much inclined to forgive this jealousy, which he feared the sight of his ample property, and handsome habitation must naturally awaken in the mind of a man whose own possessions were so inferior. He practised the usual trick of ordinary and vulgar minds, that of pretending himself to find some fault with those things which were particularly deserving praise, when he found Worthy disposed to pass them over in silence.

When they came in to supper, he affected to

talk of the comforts of Mr. Worthy's *little* parlour, by way of calling his attention to his own large one. He repeated the word *snug*, as applied to every thing at Mr. Worthy's, with the plain design to make comparisons favourable to his own more ample domains. He contrived, as he passed by his chair, by a seeming accident, to push open the door of a large beaufet in the parlour, in which all the finery was most ostentatiously set out to view. He protested with a look of satisfaction which belied his words, that for his part he did not care a farthing for all this trumpery: and then smiling and rubbing his hands, added, with an air of no small importance, what a good thing it is though, for people of substance, that the tax on plate is taken off. You are a happy man, Mr. Worthy; you do not feel these things; tax or no tax, it is all the same to you. He took care during this speech, by a cast of his eye to direct Mr. Worthy's attention to a great profusion of the brightest cups, salvers, and tankards, and other shining ornaments, which crowded the beaufet. Mr. Worthy gravely answered Mr. Bragwell, it was indeed a tax which could not affect so plain a man as myself: but as it fell on a mere luxury, and therefore could not hurt the poor, I was always sorry that it could not be made productive enough to be continued. A man in my middling situation, who is contented with a good glass of beer, poured from a handsome earthen mug, the glass, the mug, and the beer, all of English manufacture, will be but little disturbed at taxes on plate or on wine; but he will regret, as I do, that many of these taxes are so much evaded, that new taxes are continually brought on to make up the deficiencies of the old.

During supper the young ladies sat in disdainful silence, not deigning to bestow the smallest civility on so plain a man as Mr. Worthy. They left the room with their mamma as soon as possible, being impatient to get away to ridicule their father's old-fashioned friend at full liberty.

The Dance; or, the Christmas Merry-making; exemplifying the effects of modern education in a farm house.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Worthy asked Bragwell how his family comforts stood, and how his daughters, who, he said, were really fine young women, went on. O, as to that, replied Bragwell, pretty much like other men's handsome daughters, I suppose, that is, worse and worse. I really begin to apprehend that their fantastical notions have gained such a head, that after all the money I have scraped together, I shall never get them well married.

Betsey has just lost as good an offer as any girl could desire; young Wilson, an honest substantial grazier as any in the country. He not only knows every thing proper for his station, but is pleasing in his behaviour, and a pretty scholar into the bargain; he reads history-books and voyages of a winter's evening, to his infirm father, instead of going to the card-assembly in our town; he neither likes drinking nor sporting, and is a sort of a favourite with our parson; because he takes in the weekly numbers of a fine Bible with cuts, and subscribes to the Sunday-school, and makes a fuss about helping the poor; and sets up soup-shops, and sells bacon at an underprice, and gives odd bits of ground to his labourers to help them in these dear times, as they call them; but I think they are good times for *us*, Mr. Worthy.

Well, for all this, Betsey only despised him, and laughed at him; but as he is both handsome, and rich, I thought she might come round at last; and so I invited him to come and stay a day or two at Christmas, when we have always a little sort of merry-making here. But it would not do. He scorned to talk that palavering stuff which she has been used to in the marble-covered books I told you of. He told her, indeed, that it would be the happiness of his heart to live with her; which I own I thought was as much as could be expected of any man. But Miss had no notion of marrying any one who was only desirous of living with her. No, no, forsooth, her lover must declare himself ready to die for her, which honest Wilson was not such a fool as to offer to do. In the afternoon, however, he got a little into her favour by making out a rebus or two in the Lady's Diary; and she condescended to say, she did not think Mr. Wilson had been so good a scholar; but he soon spoilt all again. We had a little dance in the evening. The young man, though he had not much taste for those sort of gambols, yet thought he could foot it a little in the old fashioned way. So he asked Betsey to be his partner. But when he asked what dance they should call, Miss drew up her head, and in a strange gibberish, said she should dance nothing but a *Menuet de la Cour*, and ordered him to call it. Wilson stared, and honestly told her she must call it herself; for he could neither spell nor pronounce such outlandish words, nor assist in such an outlandish performance. I burst out a laughing, and told him, I supposed it something like questions and commands; and if so, that was much merrier than dancing. Seeing her partner standing stock still, and not knowing how to get out of the scrape, the girl began by herself, and fell to swimming, and sinking, and capering, and flourishing, and posturing, for all the world just like the man on the slack rope at our fair. But seeing Wilson standing like a stuck pig, and we all laughing at her, she resolved to wreak her malice upon him; so, with a look of rage and disdain, she advised him to go down country bumpkin, with the dairy maid, who would make a much fitter partner, as well as wife, for him, than she could do.

I am quite of your mind, Miss, said he, with more spirit than I thought was in him; you may make a good partner for a dance, but you would make a sad one to go through life with. I will take my leave of you, Miss, with this short story. I had lately a pretty large concern in hay-jobbing, which took me to London. I waited a good while in the Hay-Market for my dealer, and, to pass away the time, I stepped into a sort of foreign singing play-house there, where I was grieved to the heart to see young women painted and dizened out, and capering away just as you have been doing. I thought it bad enough in them, and wondered the qua-

lity could be entertained with such indecent mummery. But little did I think to meet with the same paint, finery, and posturing tricks in a farm house. I will never marry a woman who despises me, nor the station in which I should place her, and so I take my leave.—Poor girl, how she *was* provoked! to be publicly refused, and turned off, as it were, by a grazier! But it was of use to some of the other girls, who have not held up their heads quite so high since, nor painted quite so red, but have condescended to speak to their equals.

But how I run on! I forget it is Saturday night, and that I ought to be paying my workmen, who are all waiting for me without.

Saturday Night; or the Workmen's Wages.

As soon as Mr. Bragwell had done paying his men, Mr. Worthy, who was always ready to extract something useful from accidental circumstances, said to him, I have made it a habit, and I hope not an unprofitable one, of trying to turn to some moral use, not only all the events of daily life, but all the employments of it too. And though it occurs so often, I hardly know one that sets me thinking more seriously than the ordinary business you have been discharging.—Ay, said Bragwell, it sets me thinking too, and seriously, as you say, when I observe how much the price of wages is increased.—Yes, yes, you are ready enough to think of that, said Worthy, but you say not a word of how much the value of your land is increased, and that the more you pay, the more you can afford to pay. But the thoughts I spoke of are quite of another cast.

When I call in my labourers, on a Saturday night, to pay them, it often brings to my mind the great and general day of account, when I, and you, and all of us, shall be called to our grand and awful reckoning, when we shall go to receive *our* wages, master and servants, farmer and labourer. When I see that one of my men has failed of the wages he should have received, because he has been idling at a fair; another has lost a day by a drinking-bout, a third confesses that, though he had task-work, and might have earned still more, yet he has been careless, and has not his full pay to receive; this, I say, sometimes sets me on thinking whether I also have made the most of my time. And when I come to pay even the more diligent, who have worked all the week, when I reflect that even these have done no more than it was their duty to do, I cannot help saying to myself, night is come, Saturday night is come. No repentance, or diligence on the part of these poor men can now make a bad week's work good. This week has gone into eternity. To-morrow is the season of rest; working time is over. 'There is no knowledge nor device in the grave.' My life also will soon be swallowed up in eternity; soon the space allotted me for diligence, for labour, will be over. Soon will the grand question be asked, 'What hast thou done?—Give an account of thy stewardship. Didst thou use thy working days to the end for which they were given?' With some such thoughts I commonly go to bed, and they help to quicken me to a keener diligence for the next week.

Some account of a Sunday in Mr. Bragwell's family.

Mr. Worthy had been for so many years used to the sober ways of his own well-ordered family, that he greatly disliked to pass a Sunday in any house of which Religion was not the governing principle. Indeed, he commonly ordered his affairs, and regulated his journies with an eye to this object. To pass a Sunday in an irreligious family, said he, is always unpleasant, often unsafe.—I seldom find I can do them any good, and they may perhaps do me some harm. At least, I am giving a sanction to their manner of passing it, if I pass it in the same manner. If I reprove them, I subject myself to the charge of singularity, and of being righteous over-much; if I do *not* reprove them, I confirm and strengthen them in evil. And whether I reprove them or not, I certainly partake of their guilt, if I spend it as they do.

He had, however, so strong a desire to be useful to Mr. Bragwell, that he at length determined to break through his common practice, and pass the Sunday at his house. Mr. Worthy was surprised to find that though the church bell was going, the breakfast was not ready, and expressed his wonder how this could be the case in so industrious a family. Bragwell made some awkward excuses. He said his wife worked her servants so hard all the week, that even she, as notable as she was, a little relaxed from the strictness of her demands on Sunday mornings; and he owned that in a general way, no one was up early enough for church. He confessed that his wife commonly spent the morning in making puddings, pies, syllabubs, and cakes, to last through the week; as Sunday was the only leisure time she and her maids had. Mr. Worthy soon saw an uncommon bustle in the house. All hands were busy. It was nothing but baking, and boiling, and stewing, and frying, and roasting, and running, and scolding, and eating. The boy was kept from church to clean the plate, the man to gather the fruit, the mistress to make the cheesecakes, the maids to dress the dinner, and the young ladies to dress themselves.

The truth was, Mrs. Bragwell, who had heard much of the order and good management of Mr. Worthy's family, but who looked down with disdain upon them as far less rich than herself, was resolved to indulge her vanity on the present occasion. She was determined to be even with Mrs. Worthy, in whose praises Bragwell had been so loud, and felt no small pleasure in the hope of making her guest uneasy, in comparing her with his own wife, when he should be struck dumb with the display both of her skill and her wealth. Mr. Worthy was indeed struck to behold as large a dinner as he had been used to see at a justice's meeting. He, whose frugal and pious wife had accustomed him only to such a plain Sunday's dinner as could be dressed without keeping any one from church, when he surveyed the loaded table of his friend, instead of feeling that envy which the grand preparations were meant to raise,

felt nothing but disgust at the vanity of his friend's wife, mixed with much thankfulness for the piety and simplicity of his own.

After having made the dinner wait a long time, the miss Bragwells marched in, dressed as if they were going to the assize-ball; they looked very scornfully at having been so hurried; though they had been dressing ever since they got up, and their fond father, when he saw them so fine, forgave all their impertinence, and cast an eye of triumph on Mr. Worthy, who felt he had never loved his own humble daughters so well as at that moment.

In the afternoon, the whole party went to church. To do them justice, it was indeed their common practice once a day, when the weather was good, and the road was neither dusty nor dirty, when the minister did not begin too early, when the young ladies had not been disappointed of their bonnets on the Saturday night, and when they had no smart company in the house, who rather wished to stay at home. When this last was the case, which, to say the truth, happened pretty often, it was thought a piece of good manners to conform to the humour of the guests. Mr. Bragwell had this day forborne to ask any of his usual company; well knowing that their vain and worldly conversation would only serve to draw on him some new reprimand from his friend.

Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters picked up, as usual, a good deal of acquaintance at church. Many compliments passed, and much of the news of the week was retailed before the service began. They waited with impatience for the reading the lessons as a licensed season for whispering, and the subject begun during the lessons, was finished while they were singing the psalms. The young ladies made an appointment for the afternoon with a friend in the next pew, while their mamma took the opportunity of inquiring aloud, the character of a dairy maid, which she observed with a compliment to her own good management, would save time on a week-day.

Mr. Worthy, who found himself quite in a new world, returned home with his friend alone. In the evening he ventured to ask Bragwell, if he did not, on a Sunday night, at least, make it a custom to read and pray with his family. Bragwell told him, he was sorry to say he had no family at home, else he should like to do it for the sake of example. But as his servants worked hard all the week, his wife was of opinion that they should then have a little holiday. Mr. Worthy pressed it home upon him, whether the utter neglect of his servants' principles was not likely to make a heavy article in his final account: and asked him if he did not believe that the too general liberty of meeting together, jaunting, and diverting themselves, on Sunday evenings, was not often found to produce the worst effects on the morals of servants and the good order of families? I put it to your conscience, said he, Mr. Bragwell, whether Sunday, which was meant as a blessing and a benefit, is not, as it is commonly kept, turned into the most mischievous part of the week, by the selfish kindness of masters, who, not daring to set their servants about any public work, allot them that day to follow their own devices, that they themselves may with more rigour refuse them a little indulgence, and a reasonable holiday, in the working part of the week, which a good servant has now and then a fair right to expect. Those masters who will give them half, or all the Lord's day, will not spare them a single hour of a working day. *Their* work *must* be done; God's work may be let alone.

Mr. Bragwell owned that Sunday had produced many mischiefs in his own family. That the young men and maids, having no eye upon them, frequently went to improper places with other servants, turned adrift like themselves. That in these parties the poor girls were too frequently led astray, and the men got to public houses and fives-playing. But it was none of his business to watch them. His family only did as others do; indeed it was his wife's concern; and she was so good a manager on other days, that she would not spare them an hour to visit a sick father or mother, it would be hard, she said, if they might not have Sunday afternoon to themselves, and she could not blame them for making the most of it. Indeed, she was so indulgent in this particular, that she often excused the men from going to church, that they might serve the beasts, and the maids, that they might get the milking done before the holiday part of the evening came on. She would not indeed hear of any competition between doing *her* work and taking their pleasure; but when the difference lay between their going to church and taking their pleasure, he *must* say that for his wife, she always inclined to the good-natured side of the question. She is strict enough in keeping them sober, because drunkenness is a costly sin; and to do her justice she does not care how little they sin at her expense.

Well, said Mr. Worthy, I always like to examine both sides fairly. and to see the different effects of opposite practices; now, which plan produces the greatest share of comfort to the master, and of profit to the servants in the long run? Your servants, 'tis likely, are very much attached to you; and very fond of living where they get their own way in so great a point.

O, as to that, replied Bragwell, you are quite out. My house is a scene of discord, mutiny, and discontent. And though there is not a better manager in England than my wife, yet she is always changing her servants; so that every quarter-day is a sort of jail delivery at my house; and when they go off, as they often do, at a moment's warning, to own the truth, I often give them money privately, that they may not carry my wife before the justice to get their wages.

I see, said Mr. Worthy, that all your worldly compliances do not procure you even worldly happiness. As to my own family, I take care to let them see that their pleasure is bound up with their duty, and that what they may call my strictness, has nothing in view but their safety and happiness. By this means I commonly gain their love, as well as secure their obedience. I know, that with all my care, I am liable to be disappointed, 'from the corruption that is in the world through sin.' But when

ever this happens, so far from encouraging me in remissness, it only serves to quicken my zeal. If by God's blessing, my servant turns out a good Christian, I have been a humble instrument in his hand of saving a soul committed to my charge.

Mrs. Bragwell came home, but brought only one of her daughters with her, the other, she said, had given them the slip, and was gone with a young friend, and would not return for a day or two. Mr. Bragwell was greatly displeased; as he knew that young friend had but a slight character, and kept bad acquaintances. Mrs. Bragwell came in, all hurry and bustle, saying, if her family did not go to bed with the lamb on Sundays, when they had nothing to do, how could they rise with the lark on Mondays, when so much was to be done.

Mr. Worthy had this night much matter for reflection. We need not, said he, go into the great world to look for dissipation and vanity. We can find both in a farm house. 'As for me and my house,' continued he, 'we will serve the Lord' every day, but especially on Sunday. 'It is the day which the Lord hath made; hath made for himself; we will rejoice in it,' and consider the religious use of it, not only as a duty, but as a privilege.

The next morning Mr. Bragwell and his friend set out early for the Golden Lion. What passed on this little journey, my readers shall hear soon.

PART IV.

The subject of prayer discussed in a morning's ride.

It was mentioned in the last part of this history, that the chief reason which had drawn Mr. Worthy to visit his friend just at the present time was, that Mr. Bragwell had a small estate to sell by auction. Mr. Worthy, though he did not think he should be a bidder, wished to be present, as he had business to settle with one or two persons who were expected at the Golden Lion, on that day, and he had put off his visit till he had seen the sale advertised in the county paper.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy set out early on the Monday morning, on their way to the Golden Lion, a small inn in a neighbouring market town. As they had time before them, they had agreed to ride slowly that they might converse on some useful subject, but here, as usual, they had two opinions about the same thing. Mr. Bragwell's notion of an useful subject was, something by which money was to be got, and a good bargain struck. Mr. Worthy was no less a man of business than his friend. His schemes were wise, and his calculations just; his reputation for integrity and good sense made him the common judge and umpire in his neighbour's affairs, while no one paid a more exact attention to every transaction of his own. But the business of getting money was not with him the first, much less was it the whole concern of the day. He sought in the *first place*, 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' Every morning when he rose, he remembered that he had a Maker to worship as well as a family to maintain. Religion, however, never made him neglect business, though it sometimes led him to postpone it. He used to say, no man had any reason to expect God's blessing through the day, who did not ask it in the morning; nor was he likely to spend the day in the fear of God, who did not begin it with his worship. But he had not the less sense, spirit, and activity, when he was among men abroad, because he had first served God at home.

As these two farmers rode along, Mr. Worthy took occasion, from the fineness of the day, and the beauty of the country through which they passed, to turn the discourse to the goodness of God, and our infinite obligations to him. He knew that the transition from thanksgiving to prayer would be natural and easy; and he therefore, sliding by degrees into that important subject, observed, that secret prayer was a duty of universal obligation, which every man had it in his power to fulfil, and which he seriously believed was the ground-work of all religious practice, and of all devout affections.

Mr. Bragwell felt conscious that he was very negligent and irregular in the performance of this duty; indeed, he considered it as a mere ceremony, or at least, as a duty which might give way to the slightest temptation of drowsiness at night, or business in the morning. As he knew he did not live in the conscientious performance of this practice, he tried to ward off the subject, knowing what a home way his friend had of putting things. After some evasion, he at last said, he certainly thought private prayer a good custom, especially for people who have time; and that those who were sick, or old, or out of business, could not do better; but that for his part, he believed much of these sort of things was not expected from men in active life.

Worthy. I should think, Mr. Bragwell, that those who are most exposed to temptations stand most in need of prayer; now there are few, methinks, who are more exposed to temptation than men in business; for those must be in most danger, at least from the world, who have most to do with it. And if this be true, ought we not to prepare ourselves in the closet for the trials of the market, the field, and the shop? It is but putting on our armour before we go out to battle.

Bragwell. For my part, I think example is the whole of religion, and if the master of a family is orderly, and regular, and goes to church, he does every thing which can be required of him, and no one has a right to call him to an account for any thing more.

Worthy. Give me leave to say, Mr. Bragwell, that highly as I rate a good example, still I must set a good principle above it. I know I must keep good order indeed, for the sake of others; but I must keep a good conscience for my own sake. To God I owe secret piety, I must therefore pray to him in private.—To my family I owe a Christian example, and for that, among other reasons, I must not fail to go to church.

Bragwell. You are talking, Mr. Worthy, as if I were an enemy to religion. Sir, I am no

them imperious demands of their own—if they were not to be as rigorously accounted for, as the vivid spots and shining prospects which promise so much and produce so little.

Let us not then compute time by particular periods or signal events. Let us not content ourselves with putting our festal days only into the calendar, but remember that from the hour when reason begins to operate, to the hour in which it shall be extinguished, every particle of time is valuable; that no day can be insignificant, when every day is to be accounted for; that each one possesses weight and importance, because of each the retribution is to be received. In the prospect therefore of our coming time, let us not make great leaps from the expectation to the occurrence; but bearing in mind that small concerns make up the larger share of life, let us aim to execute well those which lie more immediately before us. For the instant occasion we have life and time in hand, for that which is prospective, we may no longer be in possession of either: and it is an argument of no small cogency, that he who devotes time to its best purposes, secures eternity for its best enjoyments.

But we are guilty of the strange inconsistency of being most prodigal of what we best love, and of throwing away what we most fear to lose, that time of which life is made up. If God does not give us a short time, we can contrive to make it short by this wretched husbandry. It is not so much indigence of time as a prodigality in the waste of it, that prevents life from answering all the ends for which it is given. Few things make us so independent of the world as the prudent disposition of this precious article. It delivers people from hanging on the charity of others to emancipate them from the slavery of their own company. We should not only be careful not to waste our own time, but that others do not rob us of it.—The distinction of crime between 'stealing our purse' and 'stealing our good name' has been beautifully contrasted. That the purse is 'trash' is a sentiment echoed by many who yet set no small value on the trash so liberally condemned; while the waster of his own, or the pilferer of another's time, escapes a censure which he ought more heavily to incur. It is a felony for which no repentance can make restitution, the commodity being not only invaluable but irrecoverable.

Considerable evil, with respect to the economy of time, arises from an error which infects some minds of a superior cast—a notion that contempt of order and custom are indications of genius, that great minds cannot be tied to times, nor enslaved by seasons. They value themselves on being systematic only in their disdain of method, on being regular in nothing but irregularity; with them accident gives the law to action. They pride themselves in not despatching business but postponing it, and this in order to show with what ability they can retrieve time to which they are always in arrears. From this vanity of intimating that they can execute in hours what costs slower souls days or weeks, the most pressing business is deferred to some indefinite period, and duties thus postponed are not seldom omitted.

The same confidence in his own powers which leads a young man of genius to believe he can catch knowledge by intuition, see every thing at a glance, and comprehend every thing in a moment, tempts him to put off that moment. But if such wonders are really to be achieved without the old ingredients, time and study, what might he not expect would be accomplished with their assistance. Those who are now marvels would then be miracles! The too common consequence of this impatience of application, is to affect to despise whatever knowledge requires time to attain, and to consider whatever demands industry to acquire, as not worth acquiring.

Nor is this error monopolized by talents. We have known some, who, having no other evidence of genius to produce, never failed to be unpunctual. It is a wonder that the more intellectual, seeing their province thus invaded by dunces, do not become regular through mere contempt of their imitators, and abandon the abuse of time to those who know not how to spend it wisely.

Christianity is a social principle. He who has discovered the use of time, and consequently the value of eternity, cannot but be solicitous for the spiritual good of his fellow-creatures. The one, indeed, is indicative of the other. But this good, like every other, is not without its dangers. We cannot essentially benefit people without associating with them, without rendering ourselves agreeable to them. But in so doing we should ever recollect that we may seek to please till we forget to serve them, we may soften strong truths to render them more palatable till we come gradually less to recommend *them*, than ourselves. In the spirit of friendly accommodation we may insensibly lower the standard of religion, with a view to make ourselves more agreeable, and may deceive in order to conciliate.

Or we may fall into another error. We may begin at the wrong end. We may censure the wrong practice without any reference to the principle, or we may suit our counsels, not to the wants, but to the taste, of our friend. In our endeavours to promote the good of others, we should be careful to find out the points in which they are most deficient. If their error be ignorance of Scripture, if worldliness, if prejudice, if a general disinclination to seriousness, if a blind respect for religion, joined to an unacquaintedness with its doctrines; in each case, a very different mode of conduct will be requisite. In each, in all, we should, indeed, with the utmost fairness, lay open the whole scheme of Christianity, neither concealing its difficulties, its humbling requisitions, nor the self-denials it imposes. But at the same time, if we suspect any one truth to be particularly revolting to them, it will be more prudent to approach this truth gradually through others, from which they are less averse, than, by forcing its introduction at the outset, shut up the way to farther progress. Every doctrine should be unfolded gradually, judiciously, temperately, not insisting on any points that are not clearly scriptural, nor on any that admit of doubtful disputation, nor on many points at a time; and, above all, on none unseasonably, or unceasingly.

This habit of turning time to account, by endeavouring to be useful to others, will, if conducted with mildness, and exercised with Christian humility, be eminently beneficial to ourselves. It will set us on a closer examination of the truths we suggest; and in contending with blindness and self-sufficiency, we shall find a wholesome exercise for our own patience and moderation. It may remind us, that we were once, perhaps in the same state. Above all, it will put us on a more strict watchfulness over our own hearts and lives, lest we should be adopting one set of principles for our conversation, and another for our conduct. It will induce the necessity of a more exact consistency, as they, to whom we are counsellors, will not be backward, if we furnish them with the least ground, to be our censurers.

And here I would affectionately suggest to my numerous amiable young friends, the benefit to be derived to their own minds from turning a certain portion of their time to the personal instruction of the poor, for which so wide a field is just now providentially opened. In communicating the elements of religious knowledge—in numberless repetitions of the same plain truths—in being obliged to begin again the simple document which they fancied they had long ago impressed—in the humbling necessity of lowering their ideas, and debasing their language, in order to make themselves intelligible—in the forbearance which dulness of intellect, perverseness of temper, and ingratitude demand, they may gain some proficiency themselves, even where their success with others is least encouraging.

But to whatever account we turn our time with respect to others, the first object of its right employment is with ourselves; and this not only in discharging those exercises of piety and virtue, which are too obvious and too generally acknowledged, to require to be specified; but, in attending to the secret dispositions of the mind, in order to ascertain its real character. We do not mean to imply that we can judge of its state by the thoughts which are necessarily suggested by any actual business, or any pressing object, such thoughts being the proper demand of the occasion, and not any certain indication of our abiding state and habitual temper.—But by watching the nature and tendency of our spontaneous thoughts, we may, in a great measure, determine on the character of our minds; their voluntary thoughts and unprompted feelings, being the streams which indicate the fountain whence they flow.—The heart is that perennial spring; for, whether grace or nature supply the current, the fountain is inexhaustible. In either case, the more abundantly it flows, the more constantly its waste is fed by fresh supplies; expense, instead of exhausting, augments the stream, whether the source from earth supply worldly thoughts, or that from above such as are heavenly. Thoughts determine on the character: *as the man thinketh so is he.*

What a scene will open upon us, when, from our eternal state, we shall look back on the use we have made of time! What a revolution will be wrought in our opinions! What a contrast will be exhibited, when we shall take a clear retrospect of all we have done, and all we ought to have done! And shall we, then, put off the inspection to an uncertain period, to a period when we can neither repent to any purpose for what was wrong, nor begin to do what we shall then perceive would have been right? Let these frequent meditations on death, lead us to reflect what the feelings of a dying bed will be. Let us think now what will then be the review of riches mis-spent, of talents neglected or perverted, of influence abused, of learning misapplied, of time misemployed! To entertain serious thoughts of death now, is the most likely method for rectifying tempers, for conquering propensities, for establishing principles, for confirming habits, of which we shall then feel the consequences; for relinquishing enterprises and pursuits, for the success of which we may then be as much afflicted, as we should now be at their defeat.

He who cannot find time to consult his Bible, will find, one day, that he has time to be sick; he who has no time to pray, must find time to die. He who can find no time to reflect, is most likely to find time to sin; he who cannot find time for repentance, will find an eternity in which repentance will be of no avail. Let us, then, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, seriously reflect, under what law we came into the world: 'it is appointed for all men once to *die*, and, after death, the JUDGMENT.' Is it not obvious, then, that the design of life is to prepare for judgment; and that, in proportion as we employ time well, we make immortality happy?

CHAP. IX.

On Charity.

IN that general use of the talents, suggested in the parable, there is also a particular vocation on the exercise of which, every man must equitably determine. Each is particularly called upon to acquit himself of that more immediate duty, for the practice of which, God has given special endowments and opportunity. Our Maker requires the specific exercise of the specific talent. The nature of the gift points out the nature of the requisition. The use of endowment is a peculiar debt, a marked obligation. This is not a gift confounded with the mass of his gifts, but one by which God designs to be, by that individual, more remarkably glorified.

But *charity* is a virtue of all times and all places. It is not so much an independent grace in itself, as an energy, which gives the last touch and highest finish to every other, and resolves them all into one common principle. It is called 'the very bond of perfectness,' not only because it unites us to God, our ultimate perfection, but because it ties all the other virtues together, and refers them thus concatenated, to Him, their common source and centre.

St. Peter having given a pressing exhortation to many exalted duties, finishes by ascribing to charity this emphatical superiority; '*Above all things*, have fervent charity.' It is, indeed, the prolific principle of all duty: a confluence of

every thing that is lovely and amiable: the fountain from which all excellences flow, the stream in which they all meet. It is not subject to the ebb and flow of passion or partiality —it is true christian sympathy. It is tender without weakness; it does not arise from that constitutional softness which may be rather infirmity than virtue. It is the affection of the Gospel; a love derived from the Spirit of Christ, and reciprocally communicated among his genuine followers.

Charity comprehends an indefinitely wide sphere, both in feeling and doing. According to the arrangement of St. Paul, in his beautiful personification of this grace,* she may be said to embrace almost the whole scheme of religious, personal, and social duty. 'Patient and kind,' she does not wait to be solicited to acts of benignity, she seizes the occasion—she does more, she watches for it. She 'endures' evils, but inflicts none; she does not select her trials, but 'bears all things.' Though 'she believes all things,' yet she exercises her hope without relinquishing her prudence; sometimes, where conviction forbids her thinking favourably, even then it does not prevent 'her hoping all things.' She subdues 'vaunting,' conquers the swellings of insolence, and the intractableness of pride. Not only 'she envieth not,' not only she disallows the injustice of desiring what is another's, but by a noble disdain of selfishness, she even 'seeketh not her own.' Her disinterestedness stirs her up to the perpetual rooting out that principle wrought by nature into the constitution of the soul. So far from thinking it a proof of spirit to resent injuries, she is not 'easily provoked' by them. She smooths the fierceness of the irrascible, and corrects the acrimony of the evil-tempered. She not only does not perpetrate, but 'she thinketh no evil.' She has found a shorter way of becoming rich than avarice ever invented, for charity makes another's goods her own by a simple process; without dispossessing the proprietor, she rejoices so much in another's prosperity that it becomes hers, because it is his.

Here we see that the Apostle places charity not only before all the virtues which he thus gracefully marshals, before qualities the most moral, gifts the most spiritual, attainments the most intellectual, but he actually degrades these last in the comparison; he does not barely lower their value, he annihilates it. Without this principle of life, this soul of duty, this essence of goodness, they are not only little, they are nothing. Without charity, possessions, talents, exertions are all fruitless. They are of no value in the sight of God: they are of no efficacy to our salvation. Charity alone sanctifies our offerings, recommends our prayers, and makes our very praises acceptable.

And though nothing is formally efficacious but the blood and merits of Christ, yet charity, as a divine grace, and one that will never cease, shows that our interest in him, and union with him, are real and genuine.

But to descend to the particulars of charity, and apply the different branches of it to the common purposes of life.—Whenever we are promoting the good of mankind, either by assisting public institutions, or relieving individuals, we are obviously helping on the cause of charity; and, when we cannot effectively assist the work, we may exercise the principle; we may pray for the happiness which we cannot confer, and rejoice in every addition to the general good towards which we cannot contribute. On the other hand, the purse may sometimes be open where the heart is shut. And it is perhaps a more rare and a higher virtue to exercise forbearance towards the faults and to put a candid construction on the actions of others, than to supply their wants, or promote their temporal interests. But whether candour in judging or liberality in giving, be the virtue in exercise, by the adoption of each as a law, and the practice of both on the ground of conformity to the Divine will, we shall acquire such a habit of exercising the kind affections, that what was adopted as a principle will be established into a pleasure; what was a force upon nature, will almost grow into a part of it; obligation will become choice, law impulse, duty necessity; the energy will become so powerful, that the heart will involuntarily spring to the performance; indolence, selfishness, trouble, inconvenience, will vanish under the vigorous operation of a habit whose motive is genuine Christianity.

One Christian grace is never exercised at the expense of another, nor is it perfect, unless it promotes that other. This charity enjoys abstinently that she may give liberally. While she restrains every wrong inclination, she stimulates us to such as are right. She is never a solitary quality, but is inseparably linked with truth and equity. She leads us perpetually to examine our means, dispositions, and opportunities, and to exert their combined force for the promotion of the greatest possible good. She teaches us to contribute to the comfort of others as well as to their necessities. She converts small kindnesses into great ones, by doing them with reference to God; for it is not so much the worth, as the temper, which will render them acceptable to Him.

We must not judge of our charity by single acts and particular instances, for they are not always good men who do good things, but by our general tendencies and propensities. We must strive after an uniformity in our charity—examine whether it be equable, steady, voluntary, and not a charity of times, and seasons, and humours. If we are as unkind and illiberal in one instance, as we are profuse in another, when the demand is equal, and we have both the choice and the means, whatever we may be, we are not charitable.

Though charity, as we have already observed, is a quality of universal application, and by no means limited within the narrow bounds of alms-giving, yet, not to allow a due, that is, a high rank and station to those works of benevolence, to which our Redeemer gives so conspicuous a place in his exhibition of the scrutiny at the general judgment, would be mistaking the genius of Christianity, would be departing from the practice and the principles of its Founder; it would be forgetting the high dig-

* First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiii.

nity he conferred on this grace, when he declared that he should consider the smallest work of love done to the least of his followers for his sake as done to himself.

This pecuniary charity is not to be limited to our particular connexions—must not be confined to unfounded attachments, to party-favourites. It must be governed by the law of justice. We must not do a little good to one which may involve a greater injury to another: yet though we should keep our heart always open, and our feelings alive to the general benefit, still, as our power must be inevitably contracted, whatever right others may have to our beneficence, local circumstances, natural expectations, and pressing necessity, confer the more immediate claim. The *most* immediate is that of 'the household of faith.'

From hence it appears, that in inquiring into the duties of charity, we must overlook the use to be made of riches, one of the talents implied in the parable. The application of money, whether 'kept by its owners to their hurt,' or squandered to their destruction, will equally be made the subject of final investigation. Lord Bacon's remark, that 'riches, when kept in a heap, are corrupt like a dunghill, but when spread abroad, diffuse beauty and fertility,' has been more admired than acted upon. All the fine sentences that have been pelted at the head of covetousness have probably never reformed one miser; nor have the most pointed aphorisms, not divinely directed, ever taught the luxurious the true use of money. Happily the age in which we live is so generally disposed to acts of beneficence, that there never was a period which less imposed the necessity to press the duty, to enforce the practice, or to point out the objects. A thousand new channels are opened, yet the old ones are not dried up; the streams flow in abundance, as if fed by a perennial fountain.

Let not any one, however, intrench himself in the supposed security of surrounding goodness. Let not any take comfort that he lives in an age of charity, if he himself is not charitable. We are not benevolent by contact or infection, or by breathing an atmosphere of charity. Yet who has not heard persons exultingly boast of this noble characteristic of the age, who are by no means remarkable for contributing their own contingent towards establishing its character? Probably many a man gloried in the valour of his country, and exulted in the pride of being an Englishman, after the battles of Trafalgar and Salamanca, who, had he been sent into the action would have been shot for cowardice.

Who has not seen the ready eye discharge its kindly showers at a tale of woe, and the frugal sentimentalist comfort himself that his tears had paid more cheaply the debt of benevolence, for which his purse had been solicited. The Author, many years ago, made one in a party of friends: an expected guest, who was rather late, at length came in; she was in great agitation, having been detained on the road by a dreadful fire in the neighbourhood. The poor family, who were gone to bed, had been with difficulty awakened. The mother had escaped by throwing herself from a two pair of stairs window into the street. She then recollected, that in her extreme terror, she had left her child behind in bed. To the astonishment of all present, she rushed back through the flames and to the general joy, soon appeared with the child alive in her arms. While she was expressing her gratitude, the light of the lamps fell on its face, and she perceived, to her inexpressible horror, that she had saved the child of another woman—her own had perished. It may be imagined what were the feelings of the company. A subscription was instantly begun. Almost every one had liberally contributed, when a nobleman, who could have bought the whole party, turning to the writer of these pages, said, 'Madam, I will give you,' every expecting eye was turned to the peer, knowing him to be unused to the giving mood, the person addressed joyfully held out her hand, but drew it back on his coolly saying, 'I will give you this affecting incident for the subject of your next tragedy.' Some will read this passage who were present on the occasion.

But since neither the logic nor the rhetoric of the writer, were she so happy as to possess either, is likely to make the 'churl liberal,' or to stir up the vain or the voluptuous to a beneficence which shall bear any fair proportion to the costly maintenance of their luxury or their vanity, the slight observations which follow shall be addressed to the bountiful giver, a character, blessed be God as common as it is amiable. 'To the act it is unnecessary to excite him; to the motive he cannot too carefully look. This is the more requisite, as, in an age in which more excellent charity sermons are annually preached than ever were delivered since the establishment of Christianity—that which alone, of all the religions in the world, ever made charitable foundations a part of its institution—we now and then meet with one which seems to invert the principle, and to put the point for the base. It is with diffidence we put the question, dreading to be suspected of indulging a spirit of censure where we would wish to offer unqualified commendation; but do we not now and then hear assigned to almsgiving, nay assigned to the individual contribution for which the well intentioned preacher is eloquently pleading, a merit so vast, that it would seem to supply the absence of all other merits; a merit which would almost induce one to believe that a more than ordinary contribution to the plate would prove a golden key, to stand in *his* stead, who 'has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers?'

To explain my meaning by an example:—In the temple of *Him* who gave his Son to die, to atone for the sins of the world, I once heard, and from no mean authority, Charity called *the atoning virtue of the age.* To have termed it the prevailing, the distinguishing, the most amiable characteristic of the age, had been right and true. But when I found it thus gravely proposed as an expiation for sin, I was ready to imagine that I heard the exclamation of St. Paul to his Galatians—'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you unto the grace of Christ unto another Gospel.'

We must readily not only allow for, but ad

mire, the ardour of an animated preacher, who, feeling his heart expand with his subject, finds it as much his delight as his duty to impart to every bosom the tender and compassionate sympathies with which his own overflows; and it is with reluctance we have presumed to intimate the restraints, which christian piety should impose on itself in not overstating even a christian duty.

We have no right to determine on the proportions and possibility of any man's charity, but on the principle we may determine; there must be an exhaustless spring in the heart, even where the Christian's means will not admit of a perpetual current. Love is in fact that motive principle, without which neither faith, nor mysteries, nor martyrdom, no nor even the addition of the second guinea to the plate, where only one had been intended, nor giving all our goods to the poor, will profit any thing. Where this vital spirit is wanting, the most ample bounty will not reach its end; where it exists, 'the cup of cold water,' shall be accepted. Without this animating principle, though the bounty may obtain applause, may influence others, may do good, and promote good, yet it may unhappily fall short of promoting the spiritual interests of the giver. He who has promised to render to every man according to his deeds, knows the principle of the deed, and has never promised to recompense any which has no reference to himself.

To neglect works of charity, not to be largely liberal in the performance of them according to our ability, is an infallible evidence that our professions of piety mean nothing. On the other hand, to depend upon them as what is to bear us out in our claims for heaven, before the tribunal of God, is to offend our Maker and deceive our own souls. We would be the very last to undervalue, or to discourage charity, but is it discouraging it to place it on its true ground; to assert that we may build an hospital without charity, as we may endow a church without piety, if we consider the one as an expiation for sin, or the other as a substitution for holiness?

Some are ingenious in contriving, by a strange self-delusion, to swell the amount of their charity, by tacking to it extraneous items of a totally distinct character. The Author was formerly acquainted with a lady of rank, who though her benevolence was suspected to bear no proportion to the splendour of her establishment, was yet rather too apt to make her bounties a subject of conversation. After enumerating the various instances of her beneficence she often concluded by saying, 'notwithstanding my large family I give all this in charity *besides paying the poor rates*;' thus converting a compulsory act, to which all are equally subject, into a voluntary bounty.

Our corruptions are so liable to infect even our 'holy things,' that we should be vigilant in this best exercise of the best affections of the heart—affections which God, when he graciously converted a duty into a delight, gave us, in order, by a pleasurable feeling, to stir us up to compassion. We should be careful that the great enemy may not be plotting our injury, even when we are performing actions the most hostile to his interests.

As there is not a more lovely virtue in the whole Christian code, so there is not one which more imperatively demands our attention to the spirit with which we exercise it, and the temper with which we bear the disappointment sometimes attending our best designed bounties. Though charity is too frequently thrown away on those who receive it, it is never lost on the benefactor if 'he who gives, does it with simplicity.'—When the bountiful giver cannot find pleasure, he may always extract good. He may reap no small advantage himself from that liberality which has failed to confer any. He may gain benefit from the disappointment he experiences in the unworthiness of the object. When the project he had anxiously formed for doing good to another is defeated by perverseness, or requited by ingratitude, it not only does not check the spring of bounty in the real Christian, but it calls new virtues into action. The exercise of patience, an improvement in forbearance and forgiveness, a stronger conviction that we must not make the worthiness of the object the sole measure of our bounty, are well worth the money we have spent on the undeserving. Perhaps too the reiterated instances how little good the best man is able to do in this world, may serve to wean him from it, and be an additional inducement for looking forward to a better.

But it is much easier to relieve our neighbour's wants, than to bear with his errors; the one gratifies our natural feelings, while the other offends them; the most difficult as well as the most sublime branch of charity, therefore, is the forgiveness of injuries, is the love of our enemies. It is a love humbly aiming to resemble his, who sends his rain on the just and on the unjust; a love not inspired by partiality, nor extorted by merit. It is following the example, while we obey the precept of Christ, when we 'do good to them that hate us.' It is a charity which bursts with a generous disdain the narrow bounds of attachment and even of desert, levels every fence which selfish prudence would erect between itself and its enemies; it is a love with respect to the objects, though with a boundless disproportion as to the measure, resembling God's love to us; it aims to be universal in kind, though it is low in the degree.

A very able divine* has insisted that it is to this part of the character of the Almighty that our Saviour limits the injunction, 'Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' It is, indeed, one of the principal instances in which finite creatures can by imitation approximate to the character of God; most of his attributes rather requiring us to adore, than leaving it possible for us to imitate them. For though all the attributes of God afford the most exalted idea of complete perfection, yet the injunction to attain his image is strikingly applied in the New Testament to this particular part of the divine character. The Apostle applies our being 'followers of God, as dear children,' afterwards to this individual instance, 'forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you,' adding, 'and walk in love as

* See bishop Sherlock's sermon on the text, 'Be ye perfect,' &c. &c.

Christ also loved us.' 'So that,' says the bishop, 'his exhortation to follow God stands inclosed on both sides with the precepts of love and charity, as if he intended to secure it from being applied to any thing else.' St. Luke, who gives us an abridgement of the same sermon on the mount, from which the passage is taken, also suggests the practice of love and forgiveness from the example of the Almighty, 'who is kind to the unthankful and the evil. After having delivered the same beatitude, he corroborates the interpretation with an injunction, by saying, not be *perfect*, but 'be merciful as your Father also is merciful.'

Our Saviour impressed a solemn emphasis on the command to forgive the offences of others, when he implicated it with God's forgiveness of us. It is to be feared, that many who would think it an act of disobedience to omit the daily repetition of the divine prayer, of which this request forms so striking a clause, do not lay to heart the daily duty of supplicating for that frame of spirit which the petition involves. Can there be a more awful consideration, than that we put the grand request on which our eternal happiness depends, on this issue, when we inseparably associate our own hope of pardon, with the required and reasonable condition of pardoning others? Should we not be conscientiously cautious, how we put up this petition, when we reflect, that we offer it to the great Searcher of hearts, who, while he listens to the request, can exactly determine on the integrity which accompanies it? The divine Author of the prayer seems to hold out a sort of test of the spirit of our obedience, when he proposes this difficult duty, as a trial of our general conformity to his commands. It seems selected by infinite wisdom as a kind of pledge of our submission to his will in all other points: our interest is confederate with our duty in the practice of this high and peculiarly Christian grace. The requisition suggests at once the most absolute obligation, and the most powerful motive.

This forgiveness seems not only to be one of the grand distinctions between the religion of the heathen and the Christian world, but to form a considerable difference between the duties inculcated in the Old and the New Testament. In the former, indeed, there were not only indications and suggestions of this rule, but some exemplifications of its actual performance. It is remarkable, that when David, whose energy of character, or rather mysterious inspiration as a prophet, led him to be so vehement in his denunciations of vengeance on persons of professed enmity against God, and against himself as the anointed of God, yet exhibited eminent instances of placability in his conduct towards his own personal enemies, especially in the case of Saul. But, perhaps, the duty, after all, was not so fully made out, so clearly defined, so positively enjoined, nor was the frame of mind so evidently seen in 'them of old time.' We have many instances under that dispensation, of saints and prophets laying down their lives for their religion, but it was reserved for the first New Testament martyr, when expiring under a shower of stones from his enemies, to say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. The reason is obvious. It being expected, that our notions and practices should be adapted to the revelation under which we live, this sublime species of charity should necessarily rise in proportion to the clearness and dignity of that dispensation. It is congruous, therefore, that our forgiveness of injuries should be exercised in far higher perfection under the Gospel, the professed object of which was to make a full and perfect revelation of the pardon of sin by the blood of a Redeemer. And we can only be said to have a conformity to his image, in proportion as we practice this grace. Let us, however, remember, to borrow the thought of an eminent divine, 'that our forgiving others will not alone procure forgiveness for ourselves, while our not forgiving others is a plain proof, that we ourselves are not forgiven.'

CHAP. X.

On Prejudice.

THERE is not a more curious subject of speculation, than to observe the vanity of colours with which opinion tinges truth: the bias which prejudice lends to facts, when it cannot deny them; the perversion it gives to the motive, when it cannot invalidate the circumstance; the warp and twist it gives to actions, which it dares not openly condemn; the disingenuousness into which it slides, even though it does not intend to maintain a falsehood; the bright rays with which it gilds, perhaps unconsciously, its own side of a question; the dark cloud by which it casts that of an adversary into the shade.

Prejudice, if not altogether invincible, is perhaps the most difficult of all errors to be eradicated from the human mind. By disguising itself under the respectable name of firmness, it is of infinitely slower extirpation than actual vice. For vice, though persisted in through the perverseness of the will, never sets itself up for virtue; a vicious man knows what is right, though his appetites deter him from following it; but a prejudice, being perhaps more frequently a fault of the judgment than of the heart, is sometimes persisted in upon principle. No man will defend a sin as such, but even good men defend a prejudice, though every one else sees that it is producing all the effects of a sin, promoting hatred, souring the temper, and exciting evils passions.

Yet, though it may incidentally be attached to a good man, there are few errors more calculated to estrange the heart from vital religion, because there are none under which men rest so satisfied. Under the practice of any immorality they are uneasy, and that uneasiness may lead to a cure; for the light of natural conscience is sufficiently strong to show, that sin and peace cannot dwell together. But prejudice effectually keeps a man from inquiring after truth, because he conceives that he is in full possession of it, and that he is following it up in the very error which keeps him so wide of it. Or if, with the Roman governor, he ask, 'what is truth?' like

him, he turns away for fear of an answer. The strongest light cannot penetrate eyes that are closed against it; while to the humble, who desire illumination, God gives not only the object, but the faculty of discerning it.

As it is mental, rather than moral prejudice, which is the present subject of consideration, we shall say little of those prejudices of which the passions and appetites are the cause. Interest and sensuality see the objects which absorb them through their own dense medium, while the vision of either is probably clear enough in judging of the objects of the other's passion; the blindness being partial, and confined, like the lunacy of some disordered patients, to the single object to which the disease has a reference. Even probity itself is not of sufficient force to guide our conduct; we see men of sound integrity and of good judgment on subjects where prejudice does not intervene, acting, where it does below the standard of ordinary men, governed by a name, carried away by a sound. It makes lovers of truth unjust, and converts wisdom into fatuity. It must, therefore, be an enlightened probity, or we may be injuring our fellow creatures, when we persuade ourselves we are doing God service. Paul does not appear to have been a profligate, but to have been correct, zealous, and moral, and to have earned a high reputation among his own narrow and prejudiced sect. His error was in his judgment. The error of Peter was in his affections. A sudden touch of self-love in this vacillating but warm hearted disciple, made him dread to share in his master's disgrace. But in this case, a single penetrating glance melted his very soul, brought him back to contrition, repentance, and love. To cure the prejudices of Paul a miracle was necessary.

While the powerful arguments of our Lord put even the Sadducees, the infidels of the day, 'to silence,' they produce no such effect on the professing Pharisees; instead of rejoicing to hear their great doctrine of the resurrection so fully vindicated, they redoubled their prejudices against him, at the very moment in which he had obtained such a triumph in their cause. The first thing they endeavoured, was to seek to entangle, by their casuistry, him who had just defeated the common enemy.

But, let us judge even the prejudiced without prejudice. Prejudice, to a certain degree, is not so much the fault of the individual, as of our common nature. And that sober tincture of it, which is inseparable from habits and attachments, is a fair and honest prepossession:—for instance, who ever reprobated, as a censurable prejudice, that generous feeling,

> For which our country is a name so dear?

But, after all, prejudice of some kind or other, is a natural inborn error, attached to that blindness, which is an incurable part of our constitution.

Disagreement of opinion, therefore, if it be an evil inseparable from our present state of being ought not to excite antipathy; complete unanimity of heart and sentiment being reserved as a part of the happiness of that more perfect state, where the effulgence of truth will dissipate all the error and misapprehension which cloud our judgment here.

People commonly intend to judge fairly: and, when they fail, it is as often an error of the understanding as of the heart. They form their opinion of some particular subject from what they see of it. But though they see only a part, they frequently form their opinion of that which remains unseen, more peremptorily than those who see the whole; for a large and clear view by affording a justness of conception, commonly induces humility. Perhaps, on their ignorance of those very parts of a question which they do not see, they form their decision on the whole; while the unseen points are precisely those which only could enable them to determine fairly on the general proposition.

We should not, however, very severely censure any for the mere opinion they form, this being a matter of the judgment rather than of the will; the true object of censure is their conduct under this false impression; in acting as hostilely as if their opinion was founded on the best ascertained facts. If we are all more or less prejudiced, it does not follow, that the conscientious act upon the feelings which the prejudice has excited. The harsh and the intolerant, indeed, let loose upon their adversaries all the bad passions which this disposition to prejudge opinions has stirred up; while the mild spirit in which Christianity governs, will conduct itself with the same general kindness as if no diversity of opinion subsisted. Though all prepossession arises from some cloudiness in the mind, it is a fair trial of the Christian temper, when the man who suffers by it, continues to exercise the same tolerant and indulgent spirit towards the prejudiced party, as if there were a mutual concurrence of sentiment. If he have no other ground of objection to the person from whom he differs, there is something of a large and liberal spirit in acting with him, and speaking of him, on other occasions, as if the matter in debate did not exist.

How endless and intricate are the misleadings of political prejudice! It is as detailed and minute in its operations, as it is broad and extensive in its compass. Will not the circumstance of voting on the same side often stand instead of the best qualities, in recommending one man to the good opinion of another? With this unfounded partiality is naturally connected a dislike to better men, on the mere ground of their taking the opposite side; for party, which takes such a large permission to think and act for itself, takes care never to allow to others the liberty which it so broadly and uniformly assumes.

He who drinks deep into the spirit of party, minutely pencils all the shades of misrepresentation; his prejudice blackening, his partiality whitening; the one deforming what is fair, the other beautifying what is foul; the one defacing temples, the other garnishing sepulchres. Providence, in the mean time, working its own way by these perverse instruments; the worst designers being sometimes surprised into doing more good than they intended, by a wish to anticipate the good projected by the opposite party, and so to throw an odium upon them, for not

having been able to effect the same, though they had perhaps planned it, and though adverse circumstances alone had interrupted the scheme, or the want of a suitable occasion had delayed its accomplishment. Thus good is effected, the public is benefited, all are pleased. The conscientious rejoice that it is done at any rate; the prejudiced, that their party have the credit of doing it.

There are among the exhaustless manœuvres of a party-champion, if I may so speak, gestures and signs of disapprobation, which are of equal efficacy with language itself. There are also artifices in writing, that resemble intonation and accent, in a skilful speaker, which, by a turn of the voice, or a clause in a parenthesis, throw in a shade of distinction, lend an emphasis which makes mystery intelligible, and helps out the apprehension of the reader. There is such a thing as an intellectual shrug of the shoulders, a mental shake of the head, an implication that has more meaning than an assertion, a hint which can effectually detract from the commendation which prudence has extorted, and which serves to awaken suspicion more than a direct charge. Whatever is omitted, is sure to be more than supplied; whatever is dexterously left open by the writer, never fails to be over-charged by the reader, who always values himself on his ingenuity in filling up an hiatus. There is a way of setting out with general praise, in order to make the meditated charge more effectual. A practised reader will see through the artful circumlocutory preface, which is gradually preparing to introduce the little, though effectually disparaging particle *but*. These artifices raise up the ghost of some unknown evil in the character to be injured, and excite, at the same time, the idea of prudence and moderation in the censure. It is a mysterious giving out, and assumed regret at being compelled to speak, a hypocritical conscientiousness, a reluctance of communication which, after it has told much more than all it knows, tenderly affects to have kept back the worst.

One evil which commonly arises from the perusal of a work of a systematic opposition, whether the object be public or private, is, that it has a tendency to bias the more liberal reader, who took it up in the most impartial state of mind, with as undue a prejudice in favor of the party attacked, as the assailant laboured to establish in favour of his own; so that, if any injustice be excited, it is on the contrary side to that which the author intended. Generally speaking, however, people do not sit down with a pure design to read impartially any thing, which, from the title of the work, or the name of the author, they foresee or suspect is likely to contradict their creed, whether previously adopted from conviction or prepossession.

But, to confine our observations to the prejudices which embitter common life:—when we fancy we have been injured by some unfounded evil report, let us avoid considering the character of the reporter, or our own supposed injury, under the immediate impression of the intelligence, but try to divert our thoughts to some other subject, till our heated spirits have time to cool. We shall otherwise, too probably, feel and utter many things which exceed the bounds of strict justice. When the resentment has, in some measure subsided, let us endeavour to collect and to retain only the simple and exact truth; what the enemy really said, and not what he suspected he might say. Let us retrench all that is imaginary, all that is merely suspicion; let us cut off all the aggravations of conjecture, all the inventions of passion, all the additions of revenge, all that belongs to unsubstantiated report;—when these due retrenchments are made, we shall often see that the injury is not so great. It is no wonder if the object we saw through a mist was enlarged; a clear medium reduces it to its natural size.

But supposing the worst to be true; religion, operating on observation, will at length teach us to set these metaphysical evils, these afflictions of the imagination, this anguish of wounded pride or irritated self-love, over against the real, deep, substantial miseries of body and mind, under which thousands of our fellow-creatures, nay many of our friends, are at the moment sinking; and we shall blush at our own irritability; we shall bless God for the lightness of our own lot; we shall even be thankful for that evil which exists only in the opinion, or the report of a fallible creature, and which makes no part of our real self.

But, above all, let us never revenge the injury by opposing *our* injustice to that by which we suffer, by acting against our opponents with the same spirit with which we accuse them of acting against us. Retaliation, which is the justice of a vulgar mind, is of the very essence of an unchristian spirit. Where this is indulged, all the virtues of the adversary are rooted out by our resentment, and it is well, if we do not plant vices in their room. Or if we do not invent faults for them, are we not too much disposed to take comfort in those they have: to cherish unkind reports of them, to give them a welcome hearing and a wide circulation? Nay, self-estimation and rooted prejudice may lead us entirely to mistake the character of him we call our enemy. A man is not necessarily wicked because he does not admire us. He may dislike some of our notions without hating our persons; or, after all, his prejudices may not be entirely ill-founded: and if we will examine ourselves on the ground of his charge in some particular instance, we may find, that we have been wrong in a way which we might not have discovered without him. If his detection of our error lead us to correct it, we should not reckon that man among our worst enemies: or, if we should happen to be right, there is a great advantage in being assisted by the mode of attack, to know how to collect materials for our defence.

We must also learn sometimes to endure censure for things right in themselves, and, under existing circumstances, necessary, which yet may not appear right to others, because it may not be prudent to disclose those secret springs of action, which, if revealed, would convince others that we have not acted wrong. Instead of spending our spirits in invective, or spoiling our temper by hatred; instead of liking our faults the better, or adhering to them the more, because pointed out by those we dislike; would

it not be wiser to inquire, if our opinions may not be prejudices, as well as theirs? For it does not inevitably follow, that even the dislike of bad men is any certain proof of our goodness; though our natural propensity to think our own conduct and opinions right, disposes us to think them more right in proportion to the opposition which is made to either. We are blind to our own singularities, even though those singularities may be errors; and a spirit of resentment or resistance makes that blindness often more obstinate. On the other hand; may we not be too much disposed to think our censurers, whom we call wicked, more wicked than they are; or, though there may be errors in their conduct, this does not take from them the capacity of judging ours. Even though their hearts are wrong, their judgment, as far as relates to others, may not be totally perverted. It is no infallible proof of their bad judgment, that they think meanly of ours.

But allowing that their judgment is as incorrect as their practice, and that their dislike proceeds from the 'strong antipathy of bad to good, yet we may turn this dislike to profit. That hostility to religion, of which the Scripture so frequently speaks, is not intended to give the Christian a high notion of his own piety, but to encourage him against the fear and dejection which that hostility might create. If he meet with opposition, he must not fly for refuge to his own goodness, as contrasted with the faults of his opponent; nor must he be depressed, 'as if some strange thing had happened to him;' much less must he convert the opposition he meets with, into an evidence, that he is in all instances right. In the consolations which the Gospel holds out to the sufferer for righteousness' sake, it was intended to inspire him with courage, not vanity; with confidence in God, not in himself. He must not, therefore, so much value himself because he has enemies, as suspect that he may have enemies, because he has deserved them. Or perhaps, their is something wrong in us which we have not yet discovered, for which God permits us to have enemies. This suspicion may serve to render us circumspect, and quicken our endeavours to remove the ground of their censure. This, even if it do not reconcile them to us, will still make us gainers by their enmity; so that, in any case, the Apostle's interrogation, 'And who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' loses nothing of its force.

Who can forbear to lament, when he sees such a litigious spirit pervades superior minds, such airy nothings conjured into difficulties, sufficient to clog the wheels of the noblest undertakings; an effect resulting merely from the partiality with which even wise men sometimes cleave to their own prepossessions, added to a reluctance to examine what may possibly be wrong on their own side, or right on the other?

It would be comparatively a small evil, if prejudices were only fostered on occasions in which religion has no concern. If we could hope to see such a general proficiency in true piety, that, where the sentiments of men concurred on all essential points, each side would sacrifice something on points that were indifferent, it would be a sort of realization of the communion of saints. But if it be called an act of Omnipotence to 'make men of one mind in a *house*,' what would it be to make them of one mind in a town or a kingdom? If we could witness a cordial agreement between those who profess to have the interests of the same religion at heart, such a concurrence in the wish to promote its great practical objects, as would render them willing to concede their own theories, or their own judgment, in things that do not affect any of the vitals of religion, with such noble materials worked up into action, what a glorious world might this become! This combination of Christian feeling would extinguish all unkind debate, 'all malice, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking. This peace-offering would oblige no one to renounce his principles; yet, by the extinction of petty differences, by such a confederacy of honest hearts and candid spirits uniting for some great public object, this wilderness would almost be converted into the garden of God. Nor would an inferior portion of the benefit be derived to the minds of those by whom, for a cause of general importance, the inconsiderable sacrifice was made; so far from it, it would be hard to say which made up the largest aggregate of good, the private exercise of individual virtue, or the promotion of the general end. But, alas! do we not sometimes see Christians more forward in attacking and exposing each other, than in buckling on their arms to make war on the common enemy? Are they not more ready to wage that war against a pious brother, who does not view some one opinion exactly in the same light with themselves, though equally zealous in the promotion of general truth, than against those who have no religion at all? What a church triumphant would our's be in one sense, though still militant in another, if there was a union of real Christians joining in one firm band to assail the strong holds of vice and immorality, instead of laying open each other's errors and mistakes, and thus exposing the great cause itself to the derison of the unbeliever.

We cannot dispute ourselves into heaven, but we may lose our way thither, while we are litigating unimportant topics—things which a man may not be much the better if he hold, and which if he hold them unrighteously, he might be better if he held them not. The enemies of religion cannot injure it so much as its own divisions about itself.

He who is zealously running after a favourite opinion, is in danger, in order to establish his point, of losing his moderation by the way, and over-stepping truth at the end: and, what is worse, of converting the sober defence of his own system into a hostile attack of that of another; for a hot disputant seldom wages defensive war. The point under discussion so heats his temper, as to make him lose sight of its real importance. Every consideration gives way in support of that opinion which has now the predominance in his mind. And this opinion is not seldom contended for with an eagerness proportioned to its real want of solidity; since great and important objects are seen by their

own light, and require not the false fire of pride or passion to blazon their worth. Often does the hot controvertist assert that to be of the very essence of religion, which is but a mere adjunct; and often he seems to wonder how men can bestow so much time and thought on any other topic, while his grand concern is under consideration.

It is because these rooted and unexamined prejudices involve human affairs in so much perplexity, that the rectification of our judgment is one of the most important objects of our concern. The opinion which others entertain of us, though it may hurt our fortune or our fame, yet it cannot injure our more essential interests. Their judgment of us can neither wound our conscience nor shake our integrity. The false judgment we form of *them* may do both, especially if we act upon the opinion we have formed, if we speak injuriously of those of whom we think unkindly; if, by following a blind prejudice or precipitate judgment, we decide upon their characters, without possessing those grounds for determining which we insist are indispensable in the opinion they form of us. Jealousy, resentment, envy, often darken our perception, and are secretly operating on our minds, while we persuade others, and too probably ourselves, that we are promoting the interests of truth and justice, in exposing the faults, or counteracting the schemes of another.

Controversies will be for ever carried on, though converts are not made: for I do not remember, that of any of the ancient sects of philosophers, any went over to their opponents. Among the professors of the old school divinity, it does not appear that the disciples ever changed their master, that the advocates of the *angelical* Doctor ever adopted the cause of the *irrefragable*;* and it is evident that the followers of Jansenius and Loyala died with the same mutual hostility in which they had lived.

As truth, however, will be assaulted, it must be defended. Controversial discussions, therefore, are not only harmless, but useful, provided truth be the inspiring motive, and charity the medium of conducting them. Truth is frequently beaten out by conflicting blows, when it might have contracted rust and impurity by lying quiet uninquired into and unassailed. We are in danger of growing negligent about a truth which is never attacked, or of surrounding it with our own fancies, and appending to it our own excrescences; while the assailant teaches even the friendly examiner to clear the principal of all foreign mixtures, and, by giving it more purity, to give it wider circulation.

But, as we before observed, a thorough partisan in religion, as well as in politics, seldom takes up a book of controversy with an unbiassed mind. He has a pre-determination which seldom gives way to argument. He does not see, that the supporter of his own cause may be maintaining it in a wrong temper; that, while he is fighting for orthodoxy, he may be aiming his side blows at a personal antagonist, or giving the death's wound to charity. He does not perceive, that he may be injuring the interests of practical religion, while he is labouring to promote such as are doctrinal, that he may be inflaming the temper, while he is informing the understanding. Yet a controversy is sometimes so managed, that, though truth may be vindicated, the minds of plain Christians may be little informed. Such readers do not understand the logician's terms, which, though they may have the effect of silencing the opponent, do but little towards enlightening the mind or strengthening the faith. Controversies, therefore, in religion or politics often do little good, in comparison of the labour they cost, and the evil tempers they excite. They are seldom read by those to whom, if temperately conducted, they might be of the most service—the unprejudiced. The perusal is commonly confined to two classes, friends and enemies. Now the friends and enemies of a writer form but a small proportion of the world of readers. Of these, the one flies to his book to get his prepossessions strengthened, the other to get his antipathies confirmed. The partisan was pre-determined that no argument should shake him, the adversary sat down with the same liberal resolution. Nay, the probability is, that he will declare his former opinion is more immoveably settled by the very reasons the opposer has suggested, so that he feels he is furnished with fresh arms by the antagonist himself.

But though neutrality is not a state of mind to be desired, moderation is. Even these polemical Christians, if each would look calmly and kindly on the other, might discover in his opponent a striking likeness of his own features, if not an entire similarity of complexion: a likeness sufficient to prove that they are both of the same family, all children of one common Father, though they do not carry the exact resemblance in some minutenesses in which parity is not necessary to prove affinity. The general family-likeness should, however, operate as an inducement to treat each other with brotherly kindness, even if they were not assured, which they all profess to be, that the common Father will be the common Judge.

* Scotus, Aquinas, and the other school divines, were distinguished by these and similar epithets.

CHAP. XI.

Particular Prejudices.

It is no inconsiderable part of our duty in our necessary connexions with that motely mass of characters of which mankind is composed, to conquer certain prejudices which are too apt to arise, especially in persons of fastidious temper and delicate taste, against those, who, though essentially valuable in their general character, have something about them which is positively disagreeable; or who do not fall in with some of our ideas, or whose manners are not congenial to our feeling. To wait before we love our fellow creatures, till their character be perfect, is to wait till we meet in heaven; and not to serve them till the feeling be reciprocal, is to act on the religion of the publican, and not of the Christian. We should love people for what we see in them of the image of their Maker

though it be marred and disfigured. That piety which makes them amiable in His sight, should prevent their being disgusting in ours. If we consulted our principles more, and our taste less, it would cure us of this sharp inquest into their infirmities.

Yet on the other hand, if religious but coarsely-mannered persons, however safe they may be as to their own state, could be aware how much injury their want of delicacy and prudence is doing to the minds of the polished and discriminating—who, though they may admire Christianity in the abstract, do not love it so cordially as to bear with the grossness of some of its professors; nor understand it so intimately, as to distinguish what is genuine from what is extrinsic—If they could conceive what mischief they do to religion, by the associations which they teach the refined to combine with it, so as to lead them inseparably to connect piety with vulgarity, they would endeavour to correct their own taste, from the virtuous fear of shocking that of others. They should remember, that many a thing is the cause of evil which yet is no excuse for it; that many a truth is brought into discredit by the disagreeableness which may be appended to it, and which, though utterly foreign, is made to belong to it.

In addition to the infirmities which, from the fault of nature, or the errors of education, are not perhaps so easily avoided, there are others which are purely voluntary.—Certain religionists there are who torment themselves with a chimera till they become the victims of the prejudice of their own creation. There is a querulous strain of pious vanity, in which, with a most unamiable egotism, they delight to indulge. It is a sort of traditionary lamentation of evils, which, having once been the lot of Christianity in the most awful extreme, are assumed to be still, in no inconsiderable degree attached to its followers. Surrounded with all the conveniences of life, and faring comfortably, if not sumptuously, every day, they yet complain of persecution, as if Christianity still subjected its followers to the sufferings of those primitive disciples, 'of whom the world was not worthy.' But let them compare the dreadful catalogue of torments enumerated by the Apostle to the Hebrews—enumerated the more feelingly, as he had experienced in all their extremity the sufferings he describes;—let them compare these with their own petty trials, of which, the worst they have ever felt or feared, is that 'of mockings:' '*cruel*, mockings,' perhaps, as to the temper of the reviler, but innoxious to the imaginary sufferer. The glorious profession of the saints of old brought on them bonds and imprisonments by order of the government. Ours is sanctioned by the ruling powers. '*They* were destitute, afflicted, tormented;' our distresses are seldom caused by our piety, but frequently by our want of it. *They* were denied the exercise of their religion, we are protected in ours. *They* were obliged to meet clandestinely at undue hours in incommodious places. With us, provision is made for public worship, and attendance on it encouraged and commanded.

Let none of us, then, proudly or peevishly complain, as if our abundant piety was either forbidden, discouraged, or under-rated. Private prejudice, and individual hatred, are indeed sufficiently alive, but the blows they aim fall hurtless as the feebly-lifted lance of Priam. If, then, we allow ourselves to murmur at our own disadvantages, will it not look as if we inwardly lamented that we are so very good to so little purpose; as if we repined at not being rewarded by universal applause for the superabundance of our piety? May we not, by our complaints, lead the world to suspect that our goodness was practised as a bait for that applause, and that, having missed it, we feel as if we had laboured in vain?

But, from the prejudices which one class of Christians are too ready to indulge against another, we turn to those of a different character; to the philosophical man of the world, who is prepossessed not so much against any particular class of Christians, as against Christianity itself. These unhappy prejudices are often laid in by an education in which no one thing has been neglected except religion. The intellect has been enlarged by the grandeur, and polished by the splendour, of pagan literature, which took early possession of the yet vacant mind, and still maintains its ascendancy with that power and energy which naturally belong to first and therefore, deep impressions. The subsequent character continues to feel the effect of the excessive admiration early excited by some favourite authors, by whom the more impetuous passions and generous vices are exalted into virtues, while the spurious virtues are elevated into perfections little short of divine, and the whole adorned with whatever can captivate the fancy and enchant the taste; with beautiful imagery, ingenious fiction, and noble poetry. Who, indeed, does not feel divided between admiration at their writings, and regret, that the writers were not providentially favoured with divine illumination? Their brightness, like that of ebony, is a fine polish on a dark substance.

Here the indignant man of letters, if any such should condescend to cast an eye on these pages, will exclaim, Are scholars, then, necessarily irreligious? God forbid! far from me be such a vulgar insinuation—far from me such a preposterous charge; not only against a multitude of eminent lay-christians, but against the whole of that large and venerable body, whose life and labours are dedicated to religion, all of whom are, or ought to be, learned.

But it is nevertheless true, reason on it as we may, that, in the state of excitement above described, every youth of taste and spirit, who has not been early grounded in Christian principles, must necessarily afterwards first open the volume of Inspiration, and find it destitute of all that false but dazzling lustre with which the page of ancient learning is decorated.

And what must considerably add to the prejudice which may reasonably be expected to be thus excited, is, that they find the great object of one religion has been to pull down all the trophies of false glory which the other had so successfully reared. The dignity of human nature, of which they have read and felt so much, is laid prostrate in the dust. Man is stripped

of his usurped attributes, robbed of his independent grandeur. A new system, of what appear to him mean-spirited and sneaking virtues—charity, simplicity, devotion, forbearance, humility, self-denial, forgiveness of injuries—is set up in direct opposition to those more ostensible qualities which are so much more flattering to the natural human heart.

Those obstacles to religious progress are removed, when, in early institution, the defective principles of the one school are not only pointed out and guarded against, but are even, as is frequently the case, converted into salutary lessons, by being placed in just contrast with the other, and are made at once to vindicate the scheme, and to exalt the principles of Christianity.

But he into whose character these principles have not been infused, is too likely to set up on the stock of his own underived powers. The cardinal vice of an irreligious reasoner will naturally be that pride which sets him on considering the Gospel as a narrower of human understanding, a debaser of the soaring spirit of intellectual man, a fetter on the expatiating fancy, a clog on the aspiring mind. This opinion, which he rather adopts by hearsay or tradition than by studying the sacred volume, continues to keep him ignorant of its contents. He is satisfied with knowing Christianity, only in the state in which it is presented to him in certain passages, torn from their proper position, disjoined with malignant ingenuity, and distorted by perverted comment, from that connexion which would have solved every difficulty and annihilated the triumphant cavil. Or if, under this influence, he takes a superficial glance at Christianity, he sees a religion, which though it prohibits no legitimate greatness, yet a religion whose object is not to make man, according to the estimation of this world, great. His secret prejudices, too, may be augmented by the revolting doctrine, that he is not able to do any thing right of himself. He is to do the work, and to give the glory to another. After having followed with rapture the conqueror of Carthage hanging up his victorious laurels in the capitol, he will feel indignant to be taught, that the Christian conqueror, instead of glorying in his triumphant crown, 'casts it before the throne.'

He had observed in pagan lore, abstract truth prepared for the philosophers, pageants, feasts, and ceremonies for the people. This distinction of rank and intellect flattered human pride. In Christianity he finds one rule, and that a plain rule: one faith, and that an humbling faith; one scheme of duties, irrespective of station or talents: while, in the other, the systems of the learned, and the superstitions of the vulgar, were as distinct as any two religions, and as inefficacious as none.

But, after all, it is not the idolatry exhibited in the Greek and Roman writers that perhaps can overthrow his faith, though their licentiousness may affect his morals. The hardest blow to his principles will be given by the modern champions of unbelief; by writers against whom the young are not on their guard, because, without Christianity, they slide in under the general title of Christians, disseminating contraband wares under false colours. The wound inflicted by the baptized infidel is more profound than that of the polytheist, whose absurdities render his aim comparatively innoxious. The preposterous systems of a false religion are harmless, compared with objections raised, misrepresentations sent forth, and sarcasms insinuated against the true one.

But if the enthusiastic votary of those systems go no farther than to establish philosophy as his standard, and taste as his guide, when he is brought to think—not that philosophy and taste are to be abandoned, for Christianity requires no such sacrifice—but that they are to be admired subordinately, the misfortune is, that the second half of life is sometimes spent in imperfectly counteracting the principles imbibed in the first half. It is not easy to get rid of the prepossession in favour of a morality untinctured with religion; of 'that love of fame which the pure spirit doth raise,' but which it is the office of the renewed spirit to lower—of the admiration exhausted on splendid, but vicious characters—of the idolatry cherished for unprincipled heroes—of the partiality felt for all the powerful rivals which genius has raised up to religion—of all the sins that poetry has canonized—all the sophistry that praise has sanctified—all the pernicious elegancies of the gay—all the hollow reasonings of the grave.

In this state of neutrality between religion and unbelief, happy is it for the faltering novice if he be not fatally offended, that Christianity admits people who are not elegant-minded, who are not intellectual, to the same present advantages, to the same future hope, with the profound thinker, and logical reasoner. And, even after the most successful struggles in this new science, it will still be found, and the discovery is humiliating, that the religious attainments of the unlearned are often more rapid, because less obstructed, than those of 'the wise and the disputer of this world.' It requires at least a smattering of wit and knowledge to be sceptical, while the plain Christian, who brings no ingenuity into his religion, is little liable to the doubts of the superficial caviller, who seeks to be 'wise above what is written.' For if the endowments of the unlearned are smaller, they are all carried to one point. They have no other pursuit to divide or divert their attention; they have fewer illusions of the imagination to repel; they bring no opposing system to the Christian scheme; they bring no prejudices against revelation, which holds out a promise of reversionary happiness to those who are destitute of present enjoyments; and Christianity will generally be more easily believed by those whose more immediate interest it is to think it true. They have no interfering projects to perplex them; no contradictory knowledge to unlearn, their uninfluenced minds are open to impressions, and good impressions are presented to them. They have less pride to subdue, and no prepossessions to extinguish. They have no compromise to make with Christianity, no images of deities, which the philosopher like the emperor Tiberius, wishes to set up in the same temple with Christ; no adverse tenets which they wish to incorporate with his religion, no ambition to convert it into a better thing than he made it. We

have seen how much philosophy early impeded the reception of pure Christianity in some of the wisest and most virtuous pagan converts. Origen and Tertullian did not receive the truth from heaven with the same simplicity as the fishermen of Galilee.

To prove that this is no flight of enthusiastic fancy, let us recollect with what an extraordinary elevation and expansion of soul the Author of our religion bore his divine testimony to this truth: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' He then, instead of accounting for it by natural means, resolves the mystery into the good pleasure of God—'*Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*'

Even the vulgarity which, as we have already observed, mixes with, and debases the religion of the man of inferior attainments; the incorrect idiom in which he expresses his feelings and sentiments; the coarse images and mean associations which eclipse the divine light, do not extinguish it: they rather, in some measure, prove its intrinsic brightness by its shining through so dense a medium. When the man of refinement sees, as he cannot but see, what amelioration Christianity confers on the character of the uneducated; how it improves his habits; raises his language; what a change it effects in his practice; what a degree of illumination it gives to his dark understanding; what consolation it conveys to his heart; how it lightens the burdens of his condition, and cheers the sorrows of his life—he will, if he be candid, acknowledge, that there must needs be a powerful efficacy in that religion which can do more for the ignorant and illiterate, than philosophy has ever done for the great and the learned. And is it not an unanswerable evidence of the truth of Christianity and the power of grace, when we see men far surpassing all others in every kind of knowledge, themselves so far surpassed in religious knowledge by persons absolutely destitute of all other.

But if these weak and humble disciples afford a convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity; if even these low recipients exhibit a striking exemplification of its excellence, yet we must confess they cannot exhibit an equally sublime idea of christian perfection, they cannot adduce the same striking evidences in its vindication, they cannot adorn its doctrines with the same powerful arguments as highly educated Christians. Habituated to inquiry and reflection, these are capable of forming more just views of the character and attributes of God, more enlarged conceptions of his moral government. They have also the advantage of drawing on their secular funds to augment their spiritual riches. They are conversant with authors contemporary with the inspired writers. Acquaintance with ancient manners and oriental usages also gives great advantage to the lettered readers of Scripture, and, by enabling them to throw new light on passages which time had rendered obscure, adds fresh strength and double confirmation, to a faith which was before 'barred up with ribs of iron.'*

Scripture also affords a larger range of contemplation to those enlightened minds who study human nature at the same time, or who have previously studied it; because it was upon his own knowledge of the human character that the Saviour of the world so strikingly accommodated his religion to the wants and the relief of that being for whose salvation it was intended.

The better educated, also, will better discern, because it demands a higher exercise of the rational powers, that passages of a similar sound have not seldom a dissimilar meaning; and that it is not the word, but the ideas, which constitute the resemblance. The want of this discernment has led many well disposed, but ill informed persons, into mistakes.

Again:—Many detached texts are meant as a brief statement of a general truth, and intended to lead the reader into such trains of reflection as shall 'exercise unto godliness,' instead of exhibiting a full delineation and giving the whole face and figure, every side and aspect of the subject. Scripture frequently proposes some important topic in a popular manner, without making out its full deductions, or its series of consequences. Now, for the fuller understanding these heads, and turning them to their due improvement, the advantage lies entirely on the side of the thinking and the reasoning reader. It must be confessed, however, that the humble, though illiterate Christian, is able to attain all the practical benefits of these suggestions. He compares Scripture with Scripture, he substitutes no opinions of his own for those he there meets with, he never attempts to improve upon Christianity, he never wishes to make the Bible a better thing than he finds it. By diligent application, and serious prayer, his understanding enlarges with his piety. Above all, he does the 'will of God;' and, therefore, 'knows of the doctrine that it is of God.'

It must be confessed also, on the other hand, that the professed scholar, by converting Scripture learning into theses of discussion, is in some danger of making his knowledge more critical than practical. The same reason which is meant to enlighten, may be employed to explain away his faith; and his learning which adorns is capable also of being turned to discredit it.

We must, however, admit, that when our supposed man of high education becomes essentially pious, his piety will be of a higher strain. It is more pure, more perfect, more exempt from erroneous mixtures, more clear of debasing association, more entirely free from disgusting cant and offensive phraseology; less likely to run into imprudence, error, and excess; less in

* The paltry cavil on the impossibility that the penitent woman could anoint the feet of Jesus as he sat at meat, could only mislead such readers as were unacquainted with the recumbent posture in which the ancients took their meals. The triumphant sneer at the paralytic, who was let down from the housetop, through the tiling with his couch, could only shake the faith of those who are ignorant of the manner in which the houses of eastern countries were roofed.—Whether infidel writers took advantage of the supposed ignorance of their readers, or whether their ridicule of these imputed absurdities of Scripture arose from their own ignorance we will not determine. Instances might be multiplied without number of this ignorance, or of this disingenuousness.

danger of the gloominess of superstition on one hand, and the wildness of fanaticism on the other. Having the use of a better judgment in the choice, he is not in the same danger of being misled by ignorant instructors; he is not liable to be drawn away by a vanity so difficult to restrain in the uneducated religious man; a vanity so frequently excited when he sees his own superiority, in this great point, to his worse informed neighbours. From this vanity, and this want of the restraint of that modesty imposed by superior education, the man of low condition often appears more religious than he is, because, being disposed to be proud of his piety, he is forward to talk of it. While the higher bred frequently appear less pious than they really are, from the good taste and delicacy which commonly accompany a cultivated mind. There is also another reason why they exhibit it less, they are aware that, in their own society, the exhibition would bring them no great credit.

If unlettered Christians labour under some disadvantages, we repeat it, they yet afford an internal evidence of the truth of Christianity, and an evidence of no small value. They show that it is the same principle which, when rightly received, pervades alike all hearts; a principle which makes its direct way to understandings impervious to the shafts of wit, and insensible to the deductions of reasoning—to minds sunk in low pursuits, indurated by vulgar habits. It is a striking proof of its being the same principle, that such seemingly disqualified persons possess as clear views of its nature, at least of its broad and saving truths, as the man of genius and the scholar; destitute as they are of all his advantages, wanting perhaps his natural perspicacity, unused to his habits of inquiry, incapable of that spirit of disquisition which he brings from his other subjects to the investigation of this. No one, if he examine impartially, can fail to be struck with this grand characteristic of the truth of Christianity—not only, that in all degrees of capacity and education in the same country, but that in different countries, in those where taste and learning are carried to the highest perfection, and in dark and ignorant nations, where not only the sun of science has never dawned, but where literature has never softened, nor philosophy enlarged the mind, where no glimpse of religion can be caught by a reflex light, as is the case in polished and Christian countries—yet wherever Christianity has made its way, and pierced through the native obscurity, there the genuine spirit, and the great essential fruits of the gospel, will be found just the same; the same impression is made by the same principle; the same results spring from the same cause, and the disciples of Christ, whether it be the converted Greenlander or the Academical believer, are recognised in all their distinguishing features, are identified in all the leading points. Such a concurrence in sentiment, feeling, and practice, such a union in faith, hope, and charity, amongst persons dissimilar in all other respects, unlike in all other qualities, unequal in all other requisites; minds never made to be akin by nature thus allied by grace, bearing the same stamp of resemblance in spirit as their possessors bear in the common properties of body: all this is a convincing proof that there must be something divine in a principle which can assimilate such contrarieties—which can re-unite those in one common centre who differ in all other distinctions to produce identity in the leading point. Does not all this prove it indeed to be the work of God, a work which requires not previous accomplishments or preparatory research, but only a willing mind, an unprejudiced spirit, and an humble heart? Does it not prove, that where the essence, and the spirit of Christianity really reside, it will produce the one grand effect, *a new heart and a new life.*

CHAP. XII.

Further causes of Prejudice.

It is a singular fact that the infidel and the fanatic sometime meet at the same point of error—that reason has little to do with religion. The enthusiast we are hopeless of convincing by argument, because he is commonly ignorant; but the lettered sceptic may be better taught even by his pagan masters. Plutarch, after a large discussion whether brutes had any reason, determines in the negative from this consideration, *because they had no knowledge or feeling of a Deity.* The great Roman orator expresses the same idea when he asserts, *that a capacity for religion was the distinguishing mark of rationality, and that this capacity is the most unequivocal sign of reason.*

Yet sound reason and Christian piety are sometimes represented as if they were belligerent powers, as if *Orders in Council* had been issued to cut off all commerce between them, as if they were better calculated eternally to meet sword in hand, than in the conciliatory way of treaty and negociation; as if every victory of the one, must necessarily be obtained at the expense of the other's defeat. But is it not an affront to the Giver of every good gift to represent his highest natural and his supernatural endowments as infallibly hostile to each other? It is evident that when reason and religion act in concert, they strengthen each other's hands. But when they injudiciously act in opposition, perverted reason starves the ardour of piety, or ill-judging piety hands over reason to obloquy and scorn. In every case, the ill-understood jealousy of each injures the interests of both.

The truth is, sound and sober Christianity is so far from discountenancing the use of reason, that she invites its co-operation, knowing that it possesses powerful arms to defend her cause, to defend her against the encroachments of error, the absurdities of fanaticism, the inroads of superstition, the assaults of infidelity. But while she treats it not as a rival but an ally, Christianity, strong in Almighty strength, maintains her own imperial power unfringed. While she courts the friendship of her confederate, she allows not her own uncontrolled superiority to be usurped. She assigns to reason its specific office, and makes it know and keep its proper limits. The old law, indeed, being a

formula of ceremonies, and a digest of ordinances for one particular people, left not so full an exercise for the use of reason. Descending to the most minute particulars, and being expanded into the most detailed directions, it left little for the disciple but to read the rule and follow it. But the New Testament being, as we have elsewhere observed, rather a system of principles, than a mere didactic table of small as well as great duties, leaves much more to the exercise of reason, and furnishes a much larger field for the understanding to develop, to compare, to separate, to combine. The whole plan of duty is, indeed, most clearly and distinctly laid open; but every uniting particle, every intermediate step, every concatenating link, is not traced out with amplitude and fulness.

The more instructed Christian will perceive that some expressions are merely figurative; some are directions for persons under one circumstance, and some for those under another. The Gospel requires, indeed, as implicit submission from the Christian, as the law required from the Jew; but while it proposes truths, all of which equally demand his obedience, some of them require more especially the use of his reflection, and the exercise of his sagacity. We allude not to the great 'mysteries of godliness,' but to duties which are of individual application.

If we were to pursue prejudice through all its infinite variety, we should never have done with the inexhaustible subject. Observation presents to us followers of truth of a very different cast, though their uniform object be the same. These persons, while they sometimes seek her temple by different paths, are yet oftener kept wide of each other by words than by things. Whatever, indeed, be the separating principle, prejudice is always carried to its greatest height by the impatience of the too fiery on the one hand, and the contempt of the too frigid on the other. But both, as we observed, maintain their distance more by certain leading terms by which each is found to be discriminated, and by an intolerance in each, to the terms adopted by the other, than by any radical distinction which might fairly keep them asunder. Now we do not wish them to relinquish the use of their peculiar terms, because these terms either do, or should designate to their minds the most important characters of religion. The Christian should neither shrink from his own strong hold, nor treat with repulsive disdain, him who appears earnest in his approaches towards it, though he has not as yet, through some prejudice of education, sought it in a direct way. There are many terms, such as *faith* and *grace*, and others which might be mentioned, which subject the more advanced Christian to the imputation of enthusiasm and the charge of cant. These, however, are words which are the signs of things on which his eternal hopes depend, and he uses them, even though he may sometimes do it unseasonably, yet not as the Shibboleth of a profession, but because there are no others exactly equivalent to their respective meanings. In fact, if he did not use them when occasion calls, he would be deserting his colours, and be making a compromise, to the ruin of his conscience.

But let him not in return fall too heavily on what are, to his ear, the obnoxious terms of his adversary. Let him not be so forward to consider the terms *virtue* and *rectitude* as implying heresies that must be hewed down without mercy; as substantives which must never find a place in the Christian vocabulary. They are not only very innocent but very excellent words, if he who utters them only means to express by virtue those good works which are the fruits of a right faith, and by rectitude that unbending principle of equity and justice which designates the confirmed Christian. The abuse of these terms may, indeed, make the more pious adversary a little afraid of using them, as the unnecessary multiplication of ordinary cases in which the more scriptural terms are pressed into the service, may make the less advanced Christian unreasonably shy of obtruding them.

But why must we villify in others what we are cautious of using ourselves, in order to magnify what we chuse to adopt? We should rather be glad that those who somewhat differ from us, come so near as they do; that they are more religious than we expected; that if they are in error, they are not in hostility; or if seemingly averse, it is more to the too indiscriminate and light use of the opponent's terms, than to the sober reception of the truths they convey. Let us be glad even at the worst, to see opposition mitigated, differences brought into a narrower compass. Let us not encounter as leaders of hostile armies, but try what can be done by negotiation, though never of course by concession in essentials. If the terms virtue and rectitude are used to the exclusion of faith and grace, or as substitutes for them, it may afford an opening for the pious advocate to show the difference between the principle and its consequence, the root and its produce. He should charitably remember that it is one thing for an honest inquirer to come short of truth, and another for a petulent caviller to wander wide of it. It is one thing to err through mistake or timidity, and another to offend through wilfulness and presumption. If the inquirer be of the former class, only deficient, and not malignant, he may be brought to feel his deficiency, and is often in a very improveable state. It would therefore be well to let him see that you think him right as far as he goes, but that he does not go the whole length. If he professes 'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' this is no small step: yet he may still require to be convinced that it is 'by the grace of God teaching him.' Here the two ideas expressed by your term of grace, and his of virtue, are brought into united action, with this difference, or if you please with this agreement, that your's being the cause, and his the effect, the Christian character attains its consummation between you. You must, however, endeavour to convince him, that though the greater includes the less, the reverse cannot be true; that faith and grace in the Christian sense involve virtue and rectitude, but virtue and rectitude in the philosophical sense desire to be excused from any connexion with faith and grace. But the offence taken at terms creates hostility at the outset, blocks up the avenues to each other's

heart, and leads men to be so filled with the things in which they differ, as to keep them in the dark as to the things in which they agree.

The more strict disputant will perhaps continue to insist that no such terms as virtue and rectitude are to be found in any Evangelist. Granted. Neither do we find there some other solemn words expressive of the most awful verities of our religion. The holy *Trinity* and the *satisfaction* made by the death of Christ, are not, I believe, in any part of the New Testament expressed by these terms, which were first used some ages after in the Byzantine church. But can it be said that the things themselves are not to be found there? They are not only conspicuous in every part of the Gospel, but make up the sum and substance of what it teaches.

While each disputant then contends for his own phrases, let not the one suspect that grace and faith are the watch words of enthusiasm; nor the other conclude that infidelity skulks behind virtue, and pagan pride behind rectitude. St. Paul expressly exhorts his converts to 'add to their faith virtue,' and if the inverted injunction was never given, it was not because faith was unnecessary where virtue previously existed, but because virtue, Christian virtue, never could have existed at all without previous faith. In enjoining virtue, the Apostle, upon his own uniform principle, supposes the Christian to be already in possession of faith; this he ever considers the essential substance, virtue the inseparable appendage. Thus the divine preacher on the Mount, in his prohibition of an hypocritical outside, does not say, Give alms, fast, pray; he concluded that his followers were already in the practice of those duties, and on this conviction grounded his cautionary exhortation *when* thou doest alms, *when* thou prayest, *when* thou fastest. He taught them to avoid all ostentation in duties, to which he alluded as already established. Be it observed—by the Saviour himself no attribute is so constantly enjoined or commanded as faith. His previous question to those who resorted to him to be cured, was not if they had *virtue* but *faith;* but never let it be forgotten, that as soon as the cure was performed, the man of faith was enjoined, as the surest evidence of his virtue, *to sin no more.*

CHAP. XIII.

Humility the only true greatness.

Humility is one of those qualities of which Christianity requires the perpetual practical exercise. It does not insist that we should be feeding or instructing others—that we should be every moment engaged in acts of benevolence to our fellow creatures, or of mortification to ourselves: but, whether we teach or are taught, whether communicate our good things to others, or are dependant on others for the communication to ourselves, humility is required as the invariable, the indispensable, the habitual grace, in the life of a Christian. Pride being the radical distemper of the natural man; the business, the duty, the blessedness of the spiritual man is to be freed from it.

However valuable high intellectual attainments have been found in the vindication of religion, however beneficially talents and learning have been exerted in adducing the evidences and augmenting the illustration of divine truth, yet for the most striking exemplification of genuine piety, 'To this man will I look, saith the Lord, who is of an humble spirit.' Christianity gives a new form to the virtues, by recasting them in this mould. Humility may be said to operate on the human character like the sculptor, who, in chiseling out the statue, accomplishes his object, not by laying on, but by pairing off, not by making extraneous additions, but by retrenching superfluities; till every part of the redundant material is cleared away. The reduction which true religion effects, of swelling passions, irregular thoughts, and encumbering desires, produces at length on the human mind some assimilation to the divine image—that model by which it works—as the human resemblance is gradually, and at length successfully wrought in the marble.

Christianity, though equally favourable to the loftiest as to the lowest condition of life, was not intended to make man great, but to make him contented to be little. Though no enemy to the possession and cultivation of the highest mental powers, but affording, on the contrary, the noblest objects for their investigation, and the richest materials for their exercise; yet she rests not her truth on their discussion, nor depends for making her way to the heart on their reasonings. While the cheering approbation of an humble faith is an encouragement repeatedly held out in the Gospel, there, is not one commendation of talent, except for its application—not the least notice of rank or riches, except to intimate their danger—not any mention of the wisdom of this world, except to pronounce its condemnation.

Humility stands at the head of the beatitudes, and incorporated with them all. And the gracious injunction, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' is a plain intimation, that our Redeemer particularly intended that portion of his own divine character for the most immediate object, not of our admiration only, but of our imitation.—It is the temper which of all others he most frequently commends, most uniformly enjoins, and which his own pure and holy life most invariably exhibits. If we look into the Old Testament, we see that God, after having described himself as 'the high and holy One which inhabiteth eternity,' by a transition the most unexpected, and a condescension the most inconceivable, immediately subjoins, that 'He dwelleth with the contrite and the humble; and this from a motive inexpressibly gracious, 'to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.'

Is it not incredible, that after these repeated declarations and examples of the Almighty Father, and of the Eternal Son, pride should still be thought a mark of greatness, an ebullition of

spirit, and that humility should be so little understood to be the true moral dignity of Christians? While in the religion which they profess, there is no excellence to which it is not preliminary, and of which it is not the crown; nor are other virtues genuine but as they are accompanied with this grace, and performed in this spirit. No quality has acquired its perfection, till it is clarified and refined by being steeped in humility.

It is indeed essential to the very reception of Christianity, for, without this principle, we shall be disposed to cavil at divine revelation, to reject, at least, every truth revolting to human pride; we shall require other ground for the belief in God than his revealed word, other evidence of his veracity than the internal conviction of our spiritual wants, and the suitableness of that remedy which the Gospel presents to us. This principle, therefore, is indispensable; without it, we shall be little inclined cordially to receive Christianity as a light, or to obey it as a rule. Without it we shall not discover the evil of our own hearts; and without this discovery, we shall by no means value the grace of the Holy Spirit; we shall exercise no habitual dependance on the promised assistance, nor seek for a support of which we do not feel the want.

But humility, by leading us to form a just estimate of ourselves, teaches us to discern the narrowness of our capacities. It reminds us, that there are many things even in the works of God's natural creation far above our comprehension; that from the ignorance and blindness of our minds we make frequent mistakes, and form a very erroneous judgment about things comparatively obvious and intelligible. This temper will bring us to credit with fuller cordiality the testimony which God in his word gives of himself, and cure us of the vanity of rejecting it, on the mere ground that we cannot comprehend it. It will deliver us from the desire of being—'wise above what is written,' and is the sole antidote to the perils of that promise of unhallowed knowledge, with which the grand seducer tempted his first credulous victim.

It is not till humility has practically made known to us how slowly religion produces its effects on ourselves, that we cease to marvel at its feeble influence and slow-paced efficacy on those around us. As a consequence, this principle leads the humble Christian to be severe in judging himself, and disposes him to be candid in judging others. When he compares himself with worse men, it furnishes a motive, not for vanity, but gratitude; when with better for additional self-abasement.

St. Paul seems to have been fully aware of the lagging movement which even Christians make towards the complete attainment of this heavenly temper. In his address to the Colossians, after having expressed his firm hope of their sincere conversion, in that they had 'put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,' he yet finds it expedient to exhort them; and, for this very reason, 'to put on,' together with other christian qualities which he enumerates, 'humbleness of mind.'

He might have pressed this duty under the supposition of two cases, and, in either, the injunction would be just. As they had made a public profession of Christianity, he intimates, that there was no surer way of evincing that their profession was sincere, and their conversion radical, than by this unequivocal mark, the cultivation of an humble spirit. Or, on the other hand, however deeply rooted they might be in faith and piety, he might feel it necessary to remind them, that they should not consider themselves as having attained a perfection which left no room for improvement. So far was this deep proficient in divine wisdom from thinking that all was done when the convert had entered on his new course, he enjoins them, ever after this effectual change, that they should, as a consequence as well as a proof, *therefore*, 'put on' this christian grace; and produces their conversion as a motive, '*because* you are already renewed.' He does not recommend any specific act, so much as a general disposition of 'mind,' implying, according to his uniform practice, that growth was necessary to life, and progress to perfection.

The doctrines of Christianity, and the discourses of its divine Author, are rather pointed against certain radical evil principles, than extended to their lesser ramifications. When the powerful artillery of the Gospel was more especially levelled against the strong holds of pride, it included in the attack all the minor offences resulting from it; implying, that if the citadel be conquered, the intimidated forces in the outworks will make but a feeble resistance.

Even the worldly and the careless, who are perhaps too inattentive to perceive that humility is the predominating feature in the truly religious character, as well as the most amiable and engaging part of it, yet pay it a sort of involuntary homage in adopting its outward appearance. Many among the more elegant classes of society, who cannot be brought to adopt the principle, assume the form, as the most unequivocal mark of their superior condition. But while the well-bred exhibit the polished exterior of humility in *manner*, they are called, as Christians, to cultivate the inward and spiritual grace. In spite of the laws against egotism which the code of good breeding has issued, a nearer intimacy sometimes discloses the self-satisfaction which politeness had thinly veiled. While we are prone to carry our virtues in our memory, we cannot be always on our guard against producing them in our conversation. Such virtues, for the most part popular ones, caught our taste perhaps from the applause with which they were received, or the eloquence with which they were set forth in our presence: and as we acquired them in public, and by hearing and reading, we shall be contented to exercise them in profession and talk. Many, and very many of these qualities may be grafted on the old stock, and look green and flourishing, whilst they 'have no root in themselves;' but genuine humility springs out of a root deeply fixed in the soil of a renewed heart, and takes its first ground on the full conviction of our apostacy from God.

As we make a proficiency in this humbling knowledge of ourselves, our confidence in our own virtues proportionably diminishes. The de

light we once received in the contemplation is first abated by self-distrust, and finally abolished by self-acquaintance.—Then we begin to profit by the deep sense of our own weakness, and to send forth the genuine fruits of a strength and a virtue derived from higher sources. And thus, the sound conviction of our own frailty, though purchased at the expense of a great error, may prove, if we might venture to say it, of more real benefit to our own mind, than the performance of a splendid action, if of that action all the use we had made had been to repose added confidence in our own strength, or to entertain higher notions of our own goodness.

Yet, while we ought to be deeply humbled at every fresh detection of evil in our hearts, to be discouraged at the discovery from proceeding in our Christian course is so far from being an effect of humility, that it is rather the result of pride. The traveller who meets with a fall, does not recover his ground by lying still and lamenting, but by rising and pursuing his journey. Joined with this faulty despondency, or still more frequently preceding it, is to be traced the operation of a blind and morbid pride. Particularly, if the intimation of the fault we have committed comes from others, the heart is found to rise at the bare suggestion that we are not perfect. We had perhaps been guilty of a hundred faults before, of which, as others took no notice, they made little impression on ourselves. We commit a smaller error, which draws the eyes of the world upon us, and we are not only dejected but almost hopeless. The eye of God was equally witness to our preceding faults, yet from their being secret, they produced little compunction, while that which is obvious to human inspection produces sorrow on the mere ground of producing shame. Perhaps we were permitted to fall into this more notorious error that we might be brought to advert to those of which we had been so little sensible; and though the depression consequent upon this fault is rather the consciousness of mortified pride, than of pious contrition, yet God may make use of it to awaken us to a feeling of our general corruptions, to warn us not to depend on ourselves, and to put us on our guard against 'secret faults,' as well as against open and 'presumptuous sins.'

Even a good man is not entirely exempt from the danger of occasional elation of spirit; even a good man does not always judge himself so rigorously as he ought; yet, though he makes too many partial allowances, is too much disposed to softenings and abatements, to apologies and deductions, still he is, on the whole, suspicious of himself, distrustful of his own rectitude, on his guard against habitual aberrations from humility. Though tremblingly alive to kindness, his sincerity makes him almost ready to regret commendation, because his enlightened conscience tells him, that if the panegyrist knew him as he knows himself, it would have been bestowed with much abatement; and he is little elated with the praise which is produced by ignorance and mistake.—Though he has fewer faults than some others, yet, as he must know more of himself than he can know of them, his humility will teach him to bear patiently even the censure he does not deserve, conscious how much he does deserve for faults which the censurer cannot know.

There is, however, no humility in an excessive depreciation of ourselves. We are not commanded to take a false estimate of our own character, though a low would be too frequently a just one. While the great Apostle St. Peter was contented to call himself *the servant of Jesus Christ*, his self-constituted successors, by an hyperbole of self-abasement, have denominated themselves *servants of the servants of God*. And yet they have not, it is to be feared, *always* surpassed the disciple they profess to follow, in the display of this apostolic grace.

Nor is the appearance of this quality any infallible proof of its existence. Nothing is more common than to hear affability to the poor produced as an undoubted evidence of the humility of the affluent. The act, indeed, is always amiable, whatever be the motive; but still the expression is equivocal. Does it not sometimes too much resemble that septennial exhibition of humility which calls forth so much smiling condescension from the powerful, while it conveys 'an hour's importance to the poor man's heart?' The one enjoys the brief, but keen delight, of reviling his superiors with impunity, with the better gratification of conferring favours instead of receiving them; the other, like Dryden's Achitophel, 'bowing popularly low,' wins by his courtesy, that favour, which he would not perhaps have obtained by his merit. But the curtain soon closes on the personated scene:—the next day, both fall back into their natural character and condition. The periodical condescension at once reinstates itself into seven year's dignity, while the *independent elector* cheerfully resumes his place in his *dependent* class, till the next Saturnalia again invite to the reciprocal exchange of character.

Where the difference of condition is obviously great, nothing is lost, and something may be gained by familiarity: the condescension is so apparent, that though it properly excites both admiration and gratitude in the indigent, it does not infallibly prove the lowliness of the superior. The impassable gulf which separates the two conditions, the immovable fence which establish that distance, preserve the poor from encroachment, and the rich from derogation: no swellings of heart arise against the acknowledged dependant, no dread of emulation against the avowed inferior. Even arrogance itself is gratified at seeing its train augmented by so amiable a thing as its own kindness. Notice is richly repaid by panegyric, and condescension finds it has only stooped to rise.—If we give pleasure in order to be paid with praise, we had better be less liberal that we might be less exacting. The discreetly proud are aware, that arrogant manners bar up men's hearts against them; their very pride, therefore, preserves them from insolence; the determined object being to gain hearts, and their good sense telling them that a haughty demeanor is not the way to gain them, they know how to make the exterior affable in proportion as the mind is high; for the ingenuity of pride has taught it, that popularity is only to be obtained by concealing the most offensive part of itself. Thus it can retain its

nature and gratify its spirit, without the arrogant display by which vulgar pride disgusts, and, by disgusting, loses its aim.

The true test is, how the same person feels, and how he conducts himself, towards him whose claims come in competition with his own—who treads on his heels in his pretensions, or surpasses him in his success—who is held up as his rival in genius, in reputation, in fortune, in display—who runs the race with him and outstrips him. More severe will be the test, when the competitor is 'his own familiar friend,' who was his equal, perhaps his inferior, in the contest for academical honours, but is now a more fortunate candidate for the prizes which the world distributes, or his decided conqueror on the professional Arena.

His humility is put to the trial, when he hears another extolled for the very quality on which he most values himself—commended for something in which he would, if he dared, monopolize commendation—it is tried when he sees that a man of merit has prospered in an enterprise in which *he* has failed, or when he is called upon for the magnanimity to acknowledge one who, though below him in general character, is still his superior in this particular respect—it is, when, in some individual instance, this competitor has promoted the public good by a means which *he* had declared to be totally inapplicable to the end.

The true Christian will be humble in proportion to the splendor of his endowments. Humility does not require him to stupify or disavow his understanding, and thus disqualify or indispose him for great active duties. If he possesses talents, he is not unconscious of them, but, instead of exulting in the possession, he is abased that he has not turned them to better account, he is habitually thinking how he can most essentially serve God with his own gift. Sensible that he owes every thing to his divine Benefactor, he feels that he has not made him the return to which he was bound, and that his gratitude bears little proportion to his mercies; so that the very review of his abilities and possessions, which inflates the hearts of others, only deepens his humility, only fills his mind with a fuller sense of his own defect of love and thankfulness. Every distinction, instead of intoxicating him, only augments his sense of dependence, magnifies his weight of obligation, increases his feeling of accountableness. His humility has a double excitement: he receives every blessing as the gift of God though the merits of his Son; it is increased by the reflection, that such is his unworthiness, he dares not even supplicate the mercy of his Creator but through the intercession of a Mediator: 'where is boasting then? it is excluded.'—Not only on account of any good he may have, but also on account of evils from which he has been preserved, he acknowledges himself indebted to divine assistance; so that his escapes and deliverances, as well as his virtues and successes, are subjects of gratitude rather than of self-exultation.

It will not be departing from the present object, if we contrast the quality under consideration with its opposite. While humility is never at variance with itself, pride is a very inconsistent principle. It knows not only how to assume the garb of the attribute to which it is opposed, but even descends to be abject, which humility never is. Consider it on one side, nothing is so self-supported; survey it on the other, you will perceive that nothing is so dependent, so full of claims, so exacting, so incapable of subsisting on itself. It is made up of extrinsic appendages; it leads a life of mendicity; it stoops to beg the alms of other men's good opinion for its daily bread. It is true, the happiness of a proud man, if he have rank, arises from an idea of his own importance; but still, to feed and maintain this greedy self-importance, he must look around him. His pleasures are derived, not so much from his personal enjoyments as from his superiority to others; not so much from what he possesses, as from the respect his possessions inspire. As he cannot entirely support his feelings of greatness by what he finds in himself; he supplies the deficiency by looking backward to his ancestors, and downward upon his train.—With all his self-consequence, he is reduced to borrow his dignity from the merits of the one, and the numbers of the other. By thus multiplying himself, he feels not only individually, but numerically, great. These foreign aids and adjuncts help him to enlarge the space he fills in his own imagination, and he is meanly contented to be admired for what is, in effect, no part of himself.—This sentiment is, however, by no means limited to rank or riches.

If the penury of pride drives it to seek its aliment in the praise of others, it is chiefly because we want their good opinion to confirm us in that which we have of ourselves. When we secretly indulge in reckoning up the testimonies we have collected to our worth, it is because we like to bring as many witnesses as we can muster, that we may have their approving verdict in additional proof that our judgment was right. In fact, we think better of ourselves in proportion as we contrive to make more people think well of us. But, however large the circle which 'high imaginations' draw round the individual self in the centre, we can really occupy no more than our allotted space; we may indeed change our position, but, in shifting it, we fill no more than we fillled already, for by the removal we lose as much as we gain.

It is an humbling truth, that the most powerful talents are not seldom accompanied with vehement passions, that a brilliant imagination is too frequently associated with ungoverned appetites. Neither human reason, nor motives merely moral, are commonly found to keep these impetuous usurpers in order; the strength of men's passions tempting them to violate the rules which the strength of their judgment has laid down.—Nature cannot operate without its own sphere. What is natural in the intellect, will not, of itself, govern what is natural in the appetite. If the lower part of our nature is subdued, it is not without the holy Spirit assisting the higher. Wit, especially has such a tendency to lead astray the mind which it embellishes, that it is a striking evidence of the efficacy of grace, when men, whose shining talents make virtue lovely in the eyes of others, reject themselves 'high thoughts engendering pride:' when

they, on whose lips the attention of others hangs with delight, can, themselves, by this divinely infused principle, 'bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'

There is no quality so ready to suspect, and so prompt to accuse, as that which we are considering; there is no fault which a proud man so readily charges upon others as pride; especially if the person accused possess those distinctions and accomplishments, the possession of which would make the accuser proud. Men full of themselves, are disposed to fancy others deficient in attention to them; and as it never occurs to them why those attentions are withheld, they have no other way of accounting for the neglect, but to charge the neglector with being envious of their qualities, or vain of his own. With that deep humility, which is the ground-work of his profession, the Christian alone attains to real dignity of character. If we reckon those men great who rise high, and make a distinguished figure in the world, how much higher is his claim to greatness who looks down on what the others glory in; who views with indifference the things to which the world accounts it greatness to aspire, and the consummation of greatness to attain.

The proud man, by not cordially falling in with the Christian scheme—which, if he thoroughly adopted, would shrink to nothing these bloated fancies—contracts, in effect, the duration of his existence, and reduces to almost nothing the sphere in which his boasted dignity is to be exercised. The theatre on which he is satisfied to act, is limited to the narrow stage of this world; and even on this vanishing scene, how far are the generality from being considerable actors! Pride, therefore, is something worse than fatuity, for whether the stake be high or low, it is sure to play a losing game. It is difficult to say which lot will be most terrible; his, who, having performed an obscure and painful part in this short drama, and having neglected to seek that kingdom promised to the poor in spirit, closes his life and hopes together; or his, who, having had a conspicuous part assigned him here, submits, when the curtain drops, not merely to be nothing: but oh! how much worse than nothing! Absorbed in the illusions and decorations of this shifting spectacle, or intoxicated with the plaudits of the spectators, the interminable scenes which lie beyond the grave, though, perhaps, not absolutely disbelieved, have been totally neglected to be taken into his brief reckoning.

Now, if pride were really a generous principle, if its tumour were indeed greatness, surely the soul which entertains it would exert its energies on a grand scale! If ambition were indeed a noble sentiment, would it not be pointed to the noblest objects; would it not be directed to the sublimest end? Would not the mind which is filled with it, achieve a loftier flight? Would it stoop to be cooped up within the scanty precincts of a perishing world? True ambition would raise its votary above the petty projects which every accident may overturn, and every breath destroy; which a few months *may*, and a few years *must*, terminate. It would set him upon reflecting, that all the elevation of intellect, all the depth of erudition, all the superiority of rank, all the distinction of riches is only held by the attenuated thread that attaches him to this world—a world which is itself 'hung upon nothing.' True ambition would instruct him, that he is not really great who is not great for eternity—that to know the height and depth, the length and breadth, of the knowledge of God, and of his eternal love in Christ Jesus, is the consummation of all knowledge, the top of all greatness, the substance of all riches, the sum of all wisdom; that the only object sufficiently capacious to satisfy the grasping desires, to fill the hungering soul of man, is that immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel. That state which has God for its portion, and eternity for its duration, is alone commensurate to the grandeur of a soul redeemed by the blood of Christ. This holy ambition would show him, that there is a littleness in whatever has boundaries—a penury in every thing of which we can count the value—an insignificance in all of which we perceive the end.

Let it, then, ever be considered as a destitution of true greatness, practically to blot out eternity from its plan. As a consequence, let that be truly designated 'the wisdom from above,' which makes eternity the grand feature in the aspect of our existence. And this ambition, be it remembered, is the exclusive property of the humble Christian. *His* desires are illimitable—*he* disdains the scanty bounds of time—*he* leaps the narrow confines of space. He it is who monopolizes ambition. *His* aims soar a bolder flight—*his* aspirations are sustained on a stronger pinion—*his* views extend to an immeasurable distance—*his* hopes rest in an interminable duration.

Yet if his felicity does not, like that of secular ambition, depend on popular breath, still it subsists on dependence. It subsists upon a trust which never disappoints—upon a mercy which is never exhausted—upon a promise which never deceives—upon the strength of an arm which 'scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts'—on a benignity which 'exalteth the meek and humble'—on a liberality, which, in opposition to worldly generosity, 'fills the hungry alone with good things,' and which, contrary to human vanity, sends only 'the rich empty away.'

Humility is an attribute of such antipathy to the original constitution of our nature, that no principle can possibly produce it in its full extent, and bring it to its complete maturity, but that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No spirit short of this can enable us to submit our understanding, to subdue our will, to resign our independence, to renounce ourselves.

This principle not only teaches us to bow to the authority and yield to the providence of God, but inculcates the still harder lesson of submitting to be saved in the only way He has appointed—a way which lays pride in the dust. If even, in the true servants of God, this submission is sometimes interrupted—if we too naturally recede from it—if we too reluctantly return to it, it is still owing to the remains of pride, the master sin; a sin too slowly discarded even from the renewed nature. This partial

conquest of the stubborn will, this imperfect resignation, this impeded obedience, even in the real Christian, is an abiding proof that we want farther humbling, a mortifying evidence that our hearts are not yet completely brought under the dominion of our principles.

CHAP. XIV.

On Retirement.

An old French wit says, that 'ambition itself might teach us to love retirement, as there is nothing which so much hates to have companions.' Cowley corrects this sentiment with one equally lively and more sound, that 'ambition, indeed, detests to have company on either side, but delights above all things in a train behind, and ushers before.' To seek therefore a retreat till we have got rid of this ambition, to fly to retirement as a scene of pleasure or improvement, till the love of the world is eradicated from the heart, or at least till this eradication is its predominant desire, will only conduct the discontented mind to a long train of fresh disappointments, in addition to that series of vexations of which it has so constantly complained in the world.

The amiable writer already referred to, who has as much unaffected elegance and good sense in his prose works, as false taste and unnatural wit in his poetry, seems not to be quite accurate when he insists in favour of his beloved solitude that 'a minister of state has not so much business in public as a wise man has in private; the one,' says he, 'has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other has all the works of God and nature under his consideration. But surely there is a manifest difference between our having great works under our consideration, and having them under our control. He assigns, indeed, high motives for the purposes of retreat, but he does not seem to assign the highest. Should he not have added in conjunction with the objects he enumerates, what should be the leading object of the retirement of the good man, the study of his own heart, as well as of inanimate nature; of the world, as well as of the works of God?

He who has spent his life in the study of mankind, till he is weary both of the study and of its object, will, with a justly framed mind, be well prepared for retirement. He will delight in it as an occasion for cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with his Maker and with himself. He will seek it not merely as the well-earned reward of a life of labour, but as a scene, which, while it advances his present comfort, furnishes him with better means of preparing for a better life. We often hear of the necessity of being qualified for the world; and this is the grand object in the education of our children, overlooking the difficult duty of qualifying them for retirement. But if part of the immense pains which are taken to fit them for the company of others, were employed in fitting them for their own company, in teaching them the duties of solitude as well as of society, this earth would be a happier place than it is; a training suitable to a world of such brief duration, would be a better preparatory study for a world which will have no end.

Leisure with dignity is a classic phrase which carries to the taste and to the heart the mingled ideas of repose, elegance, and literature. It is, indeed, an honourable state of enjoyment. It has been sung by the poet, and extolled by the philosopher. Its delights have been echoed by those who seek it, and by those that shun it; by those who desire its possession, and by those who are satisfied with its praise; by those who found their fondness on a happy experience, and by those who had rather admire than enjoy it.

Tumult, indeed, is to be avoided as a great impediment to that interior peace, without which outward stillness is of little value. But let us bear in mind that it is more easy to escape from the tumult of the world than of the passions. Before, therefore, we expect immunity from care in our projected retreat, let us inquire what is our object in retiring. We may deceive ourselves in this pursuit as we have done in others. We may fancy we are retiring from motives of religion, when we are only seeking a more agreeable mode of life. Or we may be flying, from duty, when we fancy we are flying from temptation. We may flatter ourselves we are seeking the means of piety, when we are only running away from the perplexities of our situation; from trials which make, perhaps a part of our duty. To dislike these is natural; to desire to escape from them is innocent, generally laudable. Only let us not persuade ourselves that we are influenced by one motive when we are acting from another. The design may be even good, but let us not deceive ourselves with the idea of its being better than it is. Let us not boast that we are making a sacrifice to duty, when we are consulting, however innocently, our own ease or convenience. In retreating into the country for peace of mind, the temper you would find you must carry thither. Those who retire on no other principle but to escape trouble without turning their leisure to the benefits it is calculated to impart, are happy only on the low condition of being useless. If we retire upon the motive of 'Soul take thine ease,' though neither covetousness nor sensuality be the prompting principle, if our object be a slothful indulgence, a retirement which does not involve benefit to others, as well as improvement to ourselves, we fail of the great purpose for which we came into the world, for which we withdrew from it.

But while we advert to the highest object as the best, we are far from insinuating that the taste, especially so right a taste, may not be indulged from motives of an inferior nature; far from thinking that we are not justified in preferring a tranquil to a bustling scene, and adopting a more rational, even if it be not a more religious plan of life. There is something almost like virtue in the good taste which prefers it; only, that as in intellectuals, good taste must have its substratum in good sense, so in morals it should have its substratum in principle. But if any one thinks that merely by retiring from

the world, he shall get rid of his own evil tempers, solitude is the worst choice he could make. It may indeed, through the grace of God, be made eventually beneficial; for though his interior burthen, so far from being lightened, will be more oppressively felt, yet its very oppressiveness, by leading him to look into the cause, may lead to its removal; he may be drawn to religion to get rid of himself, as he was driven to retirement to get rid of his cares.

No second causes act but by the direction of the first. The visible works of God, though so admirably calculated to stir up devotion in the heart, have not commonly, especially when habit makes them familiar, been found to produce this effect. Some of the school divines made a just distinction, when they compared inanimate and intelligent beings, in reference to the supreme Creator, by saying that the one only exhibit the foosteps of God, while the other represent his face.

It was worthy of the munificence of omnipotent Bounty, not only to spread the earth with a rich profusion of whatever is necessary and pleasant to animate life, but with whatever might invite to contemplative and intellectual life; not only to sustain but to gratify; not only to nourish but to improve: by endless variety, awakening curiosity, and by curiosity exciting research. The country is favourable to the study of natural history; furnishing both the leisure and the materials. It sets the mind upon thinking, that if the objects of God's creation are so wonderful, *Himself how wondrous then!*

The mind, indeed, which is looking out for good, finds 'sermons in stones, and good in every thing.' To minds of an opposite make, use destroys the effect, even if novelty had produced it. Little habituated to reflection, they soon learn to behold a grove of oaks with no higher feeling than a street of shops, and are as little soothed with the murmurs of a rivulet, as with the clatter of hackney coaches. Where sloth predominates in the character, we are disposed to consider the retreat from which we had promised ourselves so much advantage, as furnishing a refuge for idleness rather than a place for reflection. If vanity and vivacity predominate, we shall value the loveliest scenery we have been embellishing, rather as means to attract company and commendation, that as a help to assist our better thoughts, and lift our hearts to holy aspirations.

Though piety is no local thing, yet it has locality. That being is but a bad authority whom Milton makes proudly to exclaim, 'The mind is its own place,' and the Stoics carried their haughty mental independence too far, in asserting that local circumstances made no difference in the condition of man. Retirement is assuredly favourable to the advancement of the best ends of our being. There the soul has freer means of examining into its own state, and its dependence upon God. It has more unobstructed leisure for enjoying with its Maker,

> Communion sweet, communion large and high,

It has ampler means for reiterating the consecration of its powers and faculties to him who gave them, than it could easily find in those broken snatches and uncertain intervals which busier scenes afforded. But then we must be brought into a state and condition to reap benefit from retreat. The paralytic might as reasonably expect to remove his disease by changing his position, as the discontented to allay the unruly motions of a distempered mind merely by retiring into the country.

A great statesman, whom many of us remember, after having long filled a high official situation with honour and ability, began at length impatiently to look forward to the happy period when he should be exonerated from the toils of office. He pathetically lamented the incessant interruptions which distracted him, even in the intervals of public business. He repeatedly expressed to a friend of the author, how ardently he longed to be discharged from the oppressive weight of his situation, and to consecrate his remaining days to repose and literature. At length one of those revolutions in party, which so many desire, and by which so few are satisfied, transferred him to the scene of his wishes. He flew to his rural seat, but he soon found that the sources to which he had so long looked, failed in their power of conferring the promised enjoyment; his ample park yielded him no gratification but what it had yielded him in town, without the present drawback; there he had partaken of his vension without the incumbrance of its solitude. His Hamadryads, having no despatches to present, and no votes to offer, soon grew insipid. The stillness of retreat became insupportable; and he frankly declared to the friend above alluded to, that such was to him the blank of life, that the only relief he ever felt was to hear a rap at the door. Though he had before gladly snatched the little leisure of a hurried life for reading, yet when life became all leisure, books had lost their power to interest. Study could not fill a mind long kept on the stretch by great concerns in which he himself had been a prime mover. The history of other times could not animate a spirit habitually quickened by a strong personal interest in actual events.—There is a quality in our nature strongly indicative that we were formed for active and useful purposes. These, though of a calmer kind, may be still pursued in retirement under the influence of the only principle powerful enough to fill the heart which fancies itself emptied of the world. Religion is that motive yet quieting principle, which alone delivers a man from perturbation in the world, and inanity in retirement; without it, he will in the one case be hurried into impetuosity, or in the other be sunk into stagnation. But religion long neglected 'will not come when you do call for it.' Perhaps the noble person did not call.

It is an obvious improvement in the taste and virtue of the present day, that so many of our dictators retire, not to the *turf*, but to the *plough;* that they make an honourable and pleasant exchange of the cares and vexations of political life for the tranquil and useful pursuits of agriculture. Such pursuits yield comparative repose, and produce positive good. Besides this, the modern Cincinnatus will have the gratifica-

tion of finding how much he has gained by the change in his choice of instruments, for he will see that 'all sheep and oxen, yea and all beasts of the field,' are far less perverse, faithless and intractable than the indocile human agents whom he has been so long labouring to break in, and bring under the yoke.

But whatever he may have gained in these respects, if the philosophical and political agriculturist do not make it part of his arrangement, as we hope he does, that the cultivation of personal piety shall divide his time and his thoughts with the cultivation of his paternal acres, he will not find his own passions more tractable, his own appetites more subdued, his own tempers better regulated, because the theatre in which they are exercised is changed from contentious senates to blooming meadows. There is no power in the loveliest scenery to give that character to the mind on which its peace depends. It is true his innocent occupations will divert ambition, but it requires a more powerful operation to cure it. Ambition is an intermittent: it may, indeed, be cooled, but without piety it will be cooled as the patient in an ague is cooled 'in the well day between the two fits,' he will be looking back on the fever he has escaped, and forward to that which he is anticipating. There is but one tonic powerful enough to prevent the return of the paroxysm. He will find the perusal of the Bible not less compatible than that of the Georgics with this interesting occupation. While he is actually enjoying the lovely living images under which the inspired writers represent the most delightful truths of religion, he may realize the analogies intellectually, he may be, indeed, conducted 'to green pastures' and led beside 'the still waters of comfort' in the highest sense of those beautiful metaphors.

What a blessing is it to mankind, when they, whose large domains confer on them such extensive local influence, give their views a wider range, and take in an ampler compass of beneficial patronage; when they crown their exertions for the public good by the pious education of their young dependants, by promoting the growth of Christianity as assiduously as the breed of sheep; by extending the improvement of the soil to the moral cultivation of those whom Providence, having committed to their protection for that very purpose, will require at their hands.

With the deepest gratitude to God, let it be observed how many of these great persons, with a spirit more honourable to them than their coronets or any earthly distinctions, have stood forward as the avowed patrons of the noble Institution for dispersing the Bible into all countries, after having transfused it into every dialect of every language. When we consider the object, and view the rapidity, and trace the success, are we not almost tempted to fancy that we see the Angel in the Revelation flying in the midst of heaven, carrying 'the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell in the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.'*

It is indeed a spectacle to warm the coldest and to soften the hardest heart, to behold men of the first rank and talents, statesmen who have never met but to oppose each other, orators who have never spoken but to differ, each strenuous in what is presumed he believes right, renouncing every interfering interest, sacrificing every jarring opinion, forgetting all in which they differed, and thinking only on that in which they agree; each *reconciled to his brother and leaving his gift at the altar*, offering up every resentment at the foot of the Cross! There might be two opinions how men should be governed, there can be but one—whether they should be saved.

We ought not to doubt that a portion of that generous zeal with which they disseminate the word of life to others, will be exerted in increasing their own personal acquaintance with it. To dispense the grand instrument of salvation to others, forgetful of our own interest in it, is one of the few instances in which disinterestedness would be criminal: while here to participate in the blessing we bestow, is one of the rare occasions in which self-love is truly honourable. May we, without offence, without the remotest idea of any thing personal, hazard the observation that it is possible to be made the instrument, not only of temporal, but eternal, good to others, without reaping ourselves any advantage from the good we communicate?

It might have supplied a thesis for disputation among the whimsical subtleties of the old school divines, which was the more blameable extreme, to possess the Bible ourselves without imparting the blessing to others, or to communicate it to them without using it ourselves. Unfortunately however, the cause for casuistry was cut short, by their refusing the Bible altogether to the laity.

It is with reluctance we turn from subjects of grateful panegyric to those presented to us by the same class of society for animadversion. With regret we take leave of scenes enriched and dignified by the beneficial presence and exertions of their lords, for the dreary prospect of deserted mansions and abdicated homes. To not a few of the rich and the great, their magnificent houses are rather a cumbrous appendage to grandeur, places to which strangers resort to admire the splendour of the proprietors, and the portraits of their ancestors, than what Provi-

* May an old and attached member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge be allowed to offer her opinion (though irrelevant to the subject of this chapter,) upon the complete establishment of the argument in favour of the Bible Society, from its not injuring its venerable predecessor? It is now obvious that the benefits of the new institution are effected without detriment to the old, from its having excited fresh friends to its cause, and raised additional funds for its support. Reasoning indeed from analogy, would the benefactor, whose means were competent to both, refuse his patronage to the Middlesex Hospital, because he was already a subscriber to St. George's? When he saw that other contributors neither withdrew nor diminished, but especially when he saw that they augmented their bounty to the elder establishment, would he not bid God speed to the younger? Would he not rejoice that a new source was opened for healing *more* diseases, for relieving *more* wants? In the distribution of the Bible, are not both institutions streams issuing from the same fountain of love, both flowing into the same ocean of good? If we may be allowed the application, 'they are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit;' 'they are differences of administration, but it is the same God that worketh all in all.'

dence intended, a rich additional ingredient in their own overflowing cup of blessings. Their seats are possessed without being enjoyed. They appear, indeed, to combine the advantages of retreat with those of opulence. But it is only appearance. Do not too many of their owners strive to dispossess the scene of every attribute appended to it: Do they not chiefly derive what little they know of the charms of the country from the descriptions of the poet—of the diversities of landscape from the painters of the opera scenes—of the delights of retirement from the moralist, the philosopher, and, more frequently, the novelist? They contrive to transfer to their rural abodes every thing of the metropolis, every moveable appendage of rural beauty. Like the imperial Roman glutton, who never tasted fish but at the fartherest possible distance from the sea, they enjoy the lovely products of the conservatory, glowing with every hue, and breathing every fragrance, any where but where they grow. The most exquisite flowers yield little delight till transported to the town residence. There they exhale their sweets amid smoky lamps, and waste them on a fetid atmosphere; exhausting their beauties in the transient festivity of a single night, instead of reserving them to decorate retreat, and add one attraction more to the charms of home and the pleasures of retirement.

With these personages, the principal change from town to country consists in the difference between a park and a square. They bring to one the same tastes, the same amusements, and the same inversion of hours which they adopted in the other. They lose the true enjoyment of both, by contriving that neither town nor country shall preserve any distinct character of its own. To some, indeed, the splendid inheritance is considered as little more than a commodious inn in which to repose in their incessant migration from the capital to the watering-place, and from the chalybeate to the sea; without having the too valid plea of attending the sick, or being sick themselves.

But if we compare the domestic scenes from which they are hurrying, with the places to which they are resorting, we are inclined to pity them on the score of taste, as much as on the loss of enjoyment. A stranger to our manners who had heard of the self-denial our religion enjoins, when he compared what they had quitted with what they are flying to, would naturally compliment them on the noble sacrifice which he would conclude they had made to duty. He would admire the zeal which prompted the abandonment of such pure for such turbid pleasures: he would admire the elevation of mind which could submit to such unimposed penance. When he followed them from the splendid mansion to the close and incommodious residence, in which a crowded season sometimes immures the possessors of palaces; when he saw them renounce their blooming gardens, their stately woods, 'trees worthy of paradise,' for unshaded walks or artificial awnings; their bowers and temples for the unsheltered beach, open to all the rage of the dog star; the dry, smooth-shaven green, for sinking sands rivalling the soil of Arabia, or burning gravel, which might emulate queen Emma's ploughshares, would he not exclaim in rapture, surely these heroic ladies submit to such privations, encounter such hardships, make such renunciations from motives of the most sublime self-denial! Doubtless they crowd to these joyless abodes, because they could find at home no distress to be relieved, no innocence to be protected, no wrongs to be redressed, no ignorance to be instructed. Now, would he exultingly add, I have some practical experience of the sacrifices of which disinterested piety is capable. The good they must be doing here is indeed a noble recompence for the pleasure they are giving up.

Unimportant as this gradual revolution in our habits may be thought, there are few things which have more contributed to lower the tone both of society and solitude, than this multiplied and ever multiplying scenes of intermediate and subordinate dissipation. When the opulent divided the year between the town and country residence—the larger portion always assigned to the latter—being stationary in each, as they occupied a post of more obvious responsibility, they were more likely to fulfill their duties, than in these parentheses between both. For these places, to persons who only seek them as scenes of diversion and not as recruits to health, are considered as furnishing a sort of suspension from duty as well as an exoneration from care: the chief value of the pleasures they afford consisting in their not being *home-made*.

We have little natural relish for serious things. It is one great aim of religion to cure this natural malady. It is the great end of dissipated pleasures to inflame it. These pleasures forcibly address themselves to the senses, and thus not only lower the taste, but nearly efface the very idea of spiritual things. They gradually persuade their votaries, that nothing but what they receive through *their* medium is real. Where the allusions of sense are allowed to make their full impression, the pleasures of religion appear merely visionary; faint shadows at first, and afterwards unexisting things.

If religion makes out certain pleasures to be dangerous, these pleasures revenge themselves in their turn by representing religion to be dull. They are adopted under the specious notion of being a relief from more severe employments; whereas others less poignant would answer the end better, and exhaust the spirit less. If the effect of certain diversions only serves to render our return to sober duties more reluctant, and the duties themselves insipid, if not irksome—if we return to them as to that which, though we do not love, we dare not omit, it is a question even in the article of enjoyment, whether we do not lose more than we gain by any recreation which has the effect of rendering that disgusting which might otherwise have been delightful.

But it is never too late for a change of system, provided that change is not only *intended*, but *adopted*. We would respectfully invite those who have been slaves to custom, courageously to break their chain. Let them earnestly solicit the aid which is from above on their own honest exertions. Let them tear themselves from the fascinating objects which have hitherto detained them from making acquaintance with their own

hearts. It is but to submit heroically to a little dulness at first, which habit will convert into pleasure, to encounter temptation with a resistance which will soon be rewarded with victory. They will be sensible of one surprising revolution; from the period when they begin to inure themselves to their own company, they will insensibly dislike it less; not so much for the goodness they will find in themselves, as from discovering what a fund of interesting employment, of which they had been so long in search, their own hearts can furnish.

As the scrutiny becomes deeper, the improvement will become greater, till they will grow not so much to endure retirement as to rejoice in it, not so much to subsist without dissipation as to soar above it. If they are not so much diverted, they will be less discomposed. If there are fewer vanities to amuse, there will be fewer disorders to repair; there will be no longer that struggle between indulgence and regret, between enjoyment and repentance, between idleness and conscience, which distracts many amiable, but unfixed minds, who feel the right which they have not courage to pursue. There will be fewer of those inequalities which cost more pain in filling up than they afforded pleasure in creating. In their habits there will be regularity without monotony. There will be a uniform beauty in the even tissue of life; the web, though not so much spangled, will be more of a piece; if it be less glittering in patches, the design will be more elegant; if the colours are less glaring, they will wear better; their soberness will secure their permanence; if they are not gaudy when new, they will be fresh to the end.

CHAP. XV.

Dangers and advantages of retirement.

If some prefer retirement as an emancipation from troublesome duties rather than as a scene of improvement, others choose it as a deliverance from restraint, and as the surest mode of indulging their inclinations by a life of freedom; not a freedom from the dangers of the world, but of following their own will. While we continue in the active world, while our idleness is animated with bustle, decorated with splendor, and diversified with variety, we cheer our erroneous course with the promise of some day escaping from it; but when we sit down in our retreat, unprovided with the well chosen materials of which true enjoyment is alone compounded, or without proposing to dedicate our retirement to the obtaining them, we are almost in a more hopeless condition than when we lived without reflection in the world. We were then looking forward to the privacy we now enjoy, as to a scene of mental profit. We had in prospect a point which, if ever attained, would be to us the beginning of a new life, a post from which we should start in a nobler race. But the point is attained, and the end is neglected. We are set down in our ultimate position.

But retirement, from which we promised ourselves so much, has produced no change, except from the idleness of tumult to that of ennui in one sex, and from levity to apathy in the other. The active life which we had promised to turn into contemplative life is no improvement, if a gay frivolity is only transformed into a dull vacuity. In the world we were not truly active if we did little good; in retirement we are not contemplative, if contemplation is not exercised to the best purposes. It is in vain that we retire from great affairs, if our hearts are stuffed with such as are insignificant. There is less hope of a change in the mind, because there is no probability of a change in the circumstances with which this projected moral alteration used to be connected. Where the outset was froth, and the end is feculence, there may be a difference, but there is no improvement. We shall find in retirement, under new modifications, the same passions, tempers, and weaknesses, which we had proposed to leave behind us, without the same pretence of wanting time to watch against them. If we settle down in petty systematic trifling, it is not the size of the concern, but the spirit in which it is pursued, that makes the difference. The scandal of a village, the intrigues of a little provincial town may be entered into with as much warmth, and as little profit, as the more imposing follies of the metropolis.

Retirement, therefore, though so favourable to virtue, is not without its dangers. Taste, and, of course, conversation, is liable to degenerate. Intellect is not kept in exercise. We are too apt to give to insignificant topics an undue importance; to become arbitrary; to impose our opinions as laws; to contract, with a narrowness of thinking, an impatience of opposition. Yet, while we grow peremptory in our decisions, we are, at the same time, liable to individual influence; whereas, in the world, the injurious influence of one counsellor is soon counteracted by that of another; and if, from the collision of opposite sentiments, we do not strike out truth, we experience, at least, the benefit of contradiction. If those with whom we associate are of an inferior education and cast of manners, we shall insensibly lower our standard, thinking it sufficiently high, if it be above theirs, till we imperceptibly sink to their level. The author saw very early in life, an illustration of these remarks, in a person who had figured in the ranks of literature. He was a scholar and a poet. Disappointed in his ambitious views of rising in the church, a profession for which he was little calculated, he took refuge in a country parsonage. Here he affected to make his fate his choice. On Sundays he shot over the heads of the inferior part of his audience, without touching the hearts of the better informed; and, during the week, paid himself for the world's neglect, by railing at it. He grew to dislike polished society for which he had been well qualified. He spent his mornings in writing elegies on the contempt of the world, or odes on the delights of retirement, and his evenings in the lowest sensuality with the most vulgar and illiterate of his neighbours.

Another danger is that of aspiring to become the sun of our little system, since the love of popularity is not exclusively attached to public

situations. In the world, indeed, if there be not a real, there must at least be a spurious merit to procure it, whereas, when there are no competitors, it is easy to be popular; to be admired by the uncultivated, and flattered by the dependent, may be the attainment of the most moderately gifted. Let us not, therefore, judge of ourselves by acclamations, which would equally follow the worthless, if they filled the same situation. If we do not remember to distinguish between our merit and our place, we shall receive the homage, not as a debt of gratitude or a bait for bounty, but as a tribute to excellence. From being accustomed to flattery, we shall exact it as a right; from not being opposed, we shall learn not to endure opposition.

Besides the danger of contracting supercilious habits if surrounded with inferiors, there is also that of indulging a censorious spirit on comparing our own habits with those of persons who live in the world, and of overrating our own exemption from practices, to which, from indolence, we have no inducement, and, from circumstances, no opportunity. When we compare our hearts and lives with those of whom we now little, let us not forget to compare also, with others, our situations and temptations. The comparative estimates we make in our own favour are frequently fallacious, always dangerous. Many who live in the world have a mortified spirit, while others may bring to a cloister hearts overflowing with the love of that world from which it is easier to turn our faces than to withdraw our affections.

Secluded persons are sometimes less careful to turn to profit small parcels of time, which, when put together, make no inconsiderable fund. Reckoning that they have an indefinite stock upon hand, they neglect to devote each portion to its definite purpose. The largeness of their treasure makes them negligent of small, but incessant, expenses. For instance; instead of light reading being used as a relief from severer studies, and better employments, it is too frequently resorted to as the principal expedient for getting over the tediousness of solitude; people slide into the indulgence to such an excess, that it becomes no longer the relaxation, but the business. The better studies, which were only to be relieved, are superseded; they become dull and irksome; what was once pleasure is converted into a dry duty, and the duty is become a task. From this plenitude of leisure there is also a danger of falling into general remissness. Business which may be done at any time, is, for that very reason, not done at all. The belief that we shall have opportunities enough to repair an omission, causes omissions to be multiplied.

From the *dangers* of retirement, we come now to the more pleasant topic of its *advantages*. The retired man cannot even pretend that his character must of necessity be melted down in the general mass, or cast into the general mould. He, at least, may think for himself, may form his own plans, keep his own hours, and, with little intermission, pursue his own projects. He is less enslaved to the despotism of custom, less driven about by the absurd fluctuations of fashion. His engagements and their execution depend more immediately on himself, his understanding is left unfettered, and he has less pretence for screening himself under the necessity of falling in with the popular habits when they militate against convenience and common sense.

Many of the duties of retirement are more fixed and certain, more regular in their recurrence, and obvious as to their necessity. As they are less interrupted, the neglect of them is less excusable. In the world, events and engagements succeed each other with such rapidity and pleasure, that the imagination has hardly time or incitement to exercise itself. Where all is interruption or occupation, fancy has little leisure to operate. But if, in retirement, where this faculty finds full leisure both for exercise and for chastisement; if the undisciplined mind is left entirely to its mercy, the guilt will be enhanced, and the benefit lost; it will be ever foraging for prey, and, like other marauders, instead of stopping to select, will pick up all the plunder that falls in its way, and bring in a multitude of vain thoughts to feed upon, as an indemnification for the realities of which it is deprived. The well-regulated mind, in the stated seasons devoted to the closet, should therefore severely discipline this vagrant faculty. They who do not make a good use of *these* seasons of retirement, will not be likely to make a good use of the rest. The hour of prayer or meditation is a consecration of the hours employed in the business, whether of society or solitude. In those hours we may lay in a stock of grace, which, if faithfully improved, will shed its odour on every portion of the day.

If general society contributes more to smooth the asperities of manner, to polish roughnesses, and file off sharpnesses, retirement furnishes better means for cultivating that piety which is the only genuine softener of the temper. Without this corrective, even the manners may grow austere, and the language harsh. But while the benevolent affections are kept in exercise, and the kindly offices of humanity in operation, there will be little danger that the mind will become rough and angular from the want of perpetual collision with polished bodies. The exercise of beneficence, too, in the country is accompanied with more satisfaction, as the good done is less equivocal. In great cities, and especially in the metropolis, some charitable persons chiefly content themselves with promoting public subscriptions, and superintending public charities, for want of knowing the actual degree of individual distress or the truth of private representation. Here all the advantage lies on the side of the country resident. The characters, as well as wants, of the poor, are specifically known, and certainly the immediate vicinity of the opulent has the more natural, though not the sole claim to their bounty.

Retirement is calculated to cure the great infirmity, I had almost said the mortal disease, of not being able to be alone; it is adapted to relieve the wretched necessity of perpetually hanging on others for amusement; it delivers us from the habit of depending, not only for our solace, but almost for our existence on foreign aid, and extricates us from the bondage of submitting to any sort of society in order to get rid

of ourselves. It is very useful sometimes thus to make experiments on our own minds, to strip ourselves of helps and supports, to cut off whatever is extrinsic, and, as it were, to be reduced to ourselves. We should thus learn to do without persons and things, even while we have them, that we may not feel the privation too strongly when they are not to be had. These self-denials constitute the true legitimate self-love, as the multiplying of indulgences is the surest way to mortification.

Those to whom change is remedy, and novelty gratification, though the change be for the worse, and the novelty be a loss, are the first to bewail the disappointment which every one else foresaw. We hear those complain most that they can get no quiet, whose want of it arises from the irruptions of their own passions. Peace is no local circumstance. It does not depend on the situation of the house, but of the heart. True quiet is only to be found in the extirpation of evil tempers, in the victory over unruly appetites; it is found not merely in the absence of temptation, but in the dominion of religion. It arises from the cultivation of that principle, which alone can effectually smooth down the swellings of pride, still the restlessness of envy, and calm the turbulence of impure desires. It depends on the submission of the will, on that peace of God which passeth all understanding, on the grace of Christ, on the consolations of the Spirit.—With these blessings, which are promised to all who seek them, we may find tranquillity in Cheapside; without them we may live a life of tumult on the Eddystone.

Those who are more conversant with poetic than pious composition; who have fed their fancy with the soothing dreams of pastoral bards; who figure to themselves a state of pure felicity among the guileless beings with whom a fond imagination peoples the scene of rural life, expect when they retire into the country, to meet with a new race of mortals, pure as the fabled inhabitants of the golden age—spotless beings, who were not included in the primeval curse, creatures who have not only escaped the contamination of the world, but the original infection of sin, that sin, which they allow may be caught by contact, but which they do not know is a home-born, home-bred disease. It is indeed a most engaging vision, to associate indivisibly with the lovely scenes of nature the lovelier form of purity: but, alas! 'such scenes were never!' The groves and lawns of the country no more make men necessarily virtuous, than the brick and mortar of the church make them necessarily pious. The enthusiast of nature, while he enjoys even to rapture her unpolluted charms, must not, however, expect to find in retirement that unsullied innocence which the disappointed Cowley looked for in his retreat at Chertsey; which, after his woeful failure there, he continued to persuade himself he should find in America; which his own Claudian vainly believed might be obtained by his interesting *Old man of Verona*, on escaping from that city; which even the patriarch Lot found not, in escaping from a worse city than Verona.

Perhaps the vivid imagination of Cowley, in his eager longings for America, like that of some more recent enthusiasts, might have been kindled by the alluring appellation of the *New* World. This seducing epithet might convey to his impressible mind the idea of something young and original, and uncontaminate; something that might excite the notion, not of a new found, but new created world, fresh and fair and faultless.—But even the disjunction of continents, which was then believed, produces no such distinction in the human character; the native evil pursues the man

> Far as th' equator thrice to the utmost pole.

All experience, all history, especially that history which is supremely the record of truth, rouses us from the bewitching dream, and subverts the fair idea. It was in a garden, a garden too, 'chosen by the Sovereign Planter' that the first sin, the prolific seed of all subsequent offences, was committed. It was in a retirement more profound than any we can conceive, for it was in a world of which we know only of four inhabitants, and those of rural occupations, that the first dreadful breach of relative duties was made; that the first murder, and that of the dearest connexion, was perpetrated. And though the treason of Gethsemane was, in the divine counsels, overruled to repair the defection of Eden, yet to show how little local circumstances influence action, and govern principle, a garden was the scene where that treason was accomplished.

God would not have provided so ill for the welfare of his creatures, who, from the constitution of their nature, could not have subsisted but in communities if seclusion had been necessary to salvation. That it is the most favourable scene for the production of virtue and the promotion of piety we have fully admitted. In the world temptations meet us at every corner. In retirement, it is we who make the advances. He who had tried the extremes of public and private life, who had been a shepherd and a king, and who knew the dangers of both conditions, has given no exclusive instructions to the cottage or the throne. He gives a general exhortation to 'commune with our own hearts, and be still;' an injunction equally applicable to the sceptre and the crook; and, in his own case, he says, 'I have poured out my heart by myself;' but neither is the injunction or the example limited to the world or to retirement, for such pious practices equally belong to both. Yet it must be confessed he dwells on pastoral scenes and rural images with a fondness of which no traces are to be found in his allusion to courts and cities.

But whether we are in public or retired life, our inattention to the reason why we were sent into our present state, is one grand cause of the miseries we endure in it. In the world, as we before observed, we are more governed by our senses; in solitude, by our imagination. Both have a tendency to mislead us. The latter tells us we were not sent into this state to suffer, but to enjoy; and the senses revolt at the sufferings which the imagination had not taught us to expect. To think of exempting ourselves from pain, instead of expecting it and preparing for it, is the common error of those who

overlook or mistake the end of their being. In the hope of this exemption, we fly to one resource after another, thinking, that the ease which has hitherto eluded us, is not attained only because we have not sought it in the right way; that *all* expedients have not yet been tried; that *all* resources are not yet exhausted. Thus we take fresh comfort from the persuasion, that if we have missed of happiness, it is not because happiness is not the proper state of mortal man, nor the prohibited condition of his being, but because we have erred in our pursuit, and shall still find it in the scheme we are next about to adopt.

A bad judgment contributes to our infelicity almost as much as bad dispositions. It is by these false estimates of life, that life is made unhappy. It is from expecting from any state more than it has to bestow, that so little is enjoyed in any. He who is discontented in retirement had perhaps previously amused his vacant hours in collecting all the possibilities of happiness; but had generally caught and fixed her most alluring image in that projected retirement for which his worldly indulgences were every day more disqualifying him.

Far be it from me to aim at inspiring disgust at human life, or any despair of the real happiness which is attainable in it. This attainment is a simple process: to contract our desires, that they may be always fewer than our wants; not to expect from this life more than God meant we should find in it; neither to be governed by sense or fancy, but by the unerring word and will of God; to think constantly that the happiness of a Christian will always be more in hope than in possession; to remember that though deep and bitter sufferings are incident to our frame and state, yet the heaviest and the worst are those which man inflicts on man, or his own passions on himself; that we are only truly and irremediably unhappy when we fasten our desires on objects unsuitable or unattainable—objects neither commensurate to our higher nature, nor adapted to our future hope.

CHAP. XVI.

An inquiry why some good sort of people are not better.

There is a class of pleasing and amiable persons whom it would be difficult not to love, and unjust not to respect; but of whom, though candour obliges us to entertain a favourable hope, yet we are compelled to say, that their general conduct is rather blameless than excellent; their practice rather unoffending than exemplary; that their character rather exhibits a capacity for higher attainments, than any demonstration that such attainments are actually made.

These are the people who, from their sobriety of deportment and orderly habits, we should be naturally led to expect would make a great proficiency in religion. They are seldom hurried into irregularities; discretion is their cardinal virtue; they are frequently quoted as patterns of decorum; the finger of reproach can seldom be pointed at their conduct; that of ridicule, never.—They are not seldom kind and humane, feeling and charitable; they fill many relative duties in a manner which might put to the blush, not a few, from whose higher profession better things might have been expected.

'You have sketched a perfect character,' methinks I hear some angry reader exclaim. What more does society demand? What more would the most correct man require in his son or his wife, his sister or his daughter?

We are indeed most ready to allow, that few, comparatively, go so far; we grant that the world would be a much less disorderly and vexatious scene than it is, if the greater number reached these heights which we yet presume to consider as inadequate to the requisitions of the Gospel, as insufficient to answer the claims of Christianity. Would it not be a very melancholy consideration, if this most encouraging circumstance, of their being *not far* from the kingdom of God, should ever—which Heaven avert!—prove a possible reason for their not entering into it; if their being *almost* Christians, should be the very preventing cause of their becoming *altogether* such?

Their education has been governed rather by proprieties than principles. They have learned to disapprove of hardly any thing in the way of pleasure for its own sake, but highly to reprobate the extremes to which disorderly people carry it. They censure a thing not so much for being wrong in itself, as for being immoderate in the degree.—They condemn all the improper practices against which the world sets its face, but have not very distinct ideas of the right and the wrong in any thing which it tolerates.—Religion, which has made a part of their early instruction, took its turn with the usual accomplishments, though subordinately with respect to the earnestness with which it was inculcated, and with about the same proportion of the time allotted to it, as minutes bears to hours. It was taught as a needful thing, but not as the *one* thing needful. Religion, however, continues to maintain its appropriate place in their reading, and, to a certain degree, to be adopted into their practice, bearing nearly the same proportion to other objects as it did when they were initiated into its elements. They were bred in its forms, and in its forms they persist to live, if the term *live* can be properly applied to any thing which is destitute of the characters and properties of life. They live, it is true, but it is as the vegetable world lives in the winter's frost, which does not indeed kill it, but benumbs its powers, and suspends its vitality.

They make a conscience of reading the Scriptures, but sometimes interpret them too much in their own favour, instead of judging of the duties they inculcate by such properties and results as they promise to produce. In making it their study, they neglect to make it their standard.

They deceive themselves on many points by taking their measures from rules that are not legitimate. One makes his own taste and inclination his measure of practice, another the example of an accredited friend: almost all

plead the dread of singularity, the vanity of opposing your judgment to that of the world, and the absurdity of setting up a standard which you know to be unattainable. If you censure the thoughtlessness of the dissipated, they censure it too; lamenting that there should ever be an abuse of things so innocent and lawful. If you represent the beauty of piety, they approve of every kind of excellence in the abstract, but when you appeal to particular instances, refer them to actual exemplifications, they intimate, that, in respect to whatever exceeds their own measure, it carries in it somewhat of assumption and pretence; or else they insinuate, that however proper the thing may be in the person alluded to, *their* situation admits of an exemption; that what may be justifiable in others differently situated, would be objectionable under *their* circumstances.—Thus we involve ourselves in the flimsy web of a delusive sophistry till the error becomes destructive before it is discerned.

Excess of every kind is what they carefully avoid; and excess in religion as much as in any other thing. Under this head they expunge zeal from their catalogue of virtues. The establishment of a correct character is their first object, and the good opinion of the world the instruments by which they establish it. This keeps their views low; though it costs as much pains and precaution to keep up a high reputation on worldly grounds as it would to cultivate the principle itself, whose results would, in some respects, be nearly the same as what they are labouring to attain. To *be* the thing would be a shorter cut to comfort, than by incessant study and effort to keep up its appearance.

Propriety and order, virtues in themselves, obtain for them the reputation of still higher virtues; all that appears is so amiable, that the world readily gives them credit for qualities which are supposed to lie behind, and are only prevented by diffidence from appearing. They carry on with each other an intercourse of reciprocal, but measured flattery; this serves to promote kindness to each other, and esteem for themselves. Self-complacency is rather kept out of sight by the delicacy of good breeding, than subdued by religious conviction. They are rather governed by certain of the more sober worldly maxims, than by the strictness of Christian discipline. Though they fear sin, and avoid it, yet it is to be suspected they most carefully avoid those faults which are most disreputable, and that its impropriety has its full share in their abhorrence, with its turpitude.

As to religion, they rather respect, than love it. They seem to intimate, that there is something of irreverence in any familiarity with the subject, and place it at an awful distance, as a thing whose mysterious grandeur would be diminished by a too near approach. Another reason why they consider religion rather as an object of veneration than affection, is because they erroneously conceive it to be an enemy to innocent pleasure.

If they are not perfectly good Christians, it is not because they are good Jews, for they do not 'talk of the words' which were commanded under that dispensation, *when they sit in their house, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down, and when they rise up.* Religion engages their regard somewhat in the way in which the laws of the land engage it, as something sacred, from being established by custom and precedent; as a valuable institution for the preservation of the public good; but it does not interest their feelings; they do not consider it so much a thing of individual concern, as of general protection. Of its establishment by authority they think more highly, than of its business with their own hearts, of its influence in maintaining general order, than of its efficacy in promoting in themselves peace and joy. In short, they carve out an image of religion not altogether unorthodox, but which, like the uninformed statue of the enamoured artist, though a beautiful figure, is without life, or power, or motion.

The more obvious duties being discharged, they are a little inclined to think, that too considerable a portion of their time and talents are left at their own disposal. Large intervals of leisure are rather assumed to be a necessary repose and refreshment from right employments and benevolent actions, and as purchased by their performance, than as having any specific application of their own. In short things which they call indifferent, make up too large a portion of their scheme of life, and in their distribution of time.

The class we are considering are apt to be very severe in their censures of those who have lost their reputation, while they are rather too charitable to those who only deserve to lose it. This excessive valuation of externals is not likely to be accompanied with great candour in judging the discredited and the unfortunate. Errors which we ourselves have had no temptation to commit, we are too much disposed to think out of the reach of pardon: and, while we justly commend innocence, we give too little credit to repentance.

The misfortune is, they do not so much as suspect that there is any higher state of being, any degree of spiritual life, beyond what they have attained. They consider religion rather as a scheme of rules, than a motive principle, as a stationary point, than a perpetual progress. They consider its observances rather as an end, than a means. It is not so much natural presumption which roots them where they are, for, in ordinary cases, they are perhaps diffident and modest; it is not always conceit which prevents their minds from shooting upwards: it is the low notion they entertain of the genius of Christianity; it is the inadequateness of their views with its requirements; it is their unacquaintedness with the spirit of that religion which they profess honestly, but understand indistinctly. This ignorance makes them rest satisfied with a state which did not satisfy the great apostle. While *they* think they have made a progress sufficient to justify them in believing they have 'already attained,' *his* vast attainments served only to prevent his looking back on them, served only to stimulate him to press forward towards the mark. Some good sort of people, on the contrary, act as if they were afraid of being different from what they are, or of being surprised into becoming better than they intended.

Among the many causes which concur to keep them at a sort of determined distance from serious piety, a not uncommon one is, their happening to hear of the injudicious exhibition of religion in one or more of its high but eccentric professors: these they affect to believe, are fair specimens of the so much vaunted religious world. Instead of inquiring what is the true scriptural view of Christianity, that they may make nearer approaches to it, they are far more anxiously concerned to recede, as far as possible, from persons who falsely profess to be its best representatives. They conclude, and, in some instances, but too justly, that the profession of these people has not transformed their hearts, but their connections: that they have adopted a party rather than a principle, embraced a cloud for a goddess, and an opinion instead of a rule of conduct; and they observe that they are unjust in their enmities to other classes, in proportion to the violence of their attachment to their own. It is no wonder if, with their partial view of the subject, they should be deterred, when they see these persons act as much below their system, as they themselves not seldom live above their own.

But they do not act thus on other occasions. If they meet with an incompetent but blustering lawyer, or an unskilful but presumptuous physician, instead of calumniating the two learned faculties, instead of resolving to have no more to do with either, they avoid the offending individuals, and look out for sounder practitioners. Hence, indeed, it is to be remarked by the way, there arises a new and powerful motive, why all who make a high profession of religion should not only be eminently careful to exhibit an even and consistent practice, but should studiously avoid in their conversation all offensive phrases, and repulsive expressions; why they should not be perpetually intimating, as if *preaching the Gospel* was a party-business, and a business entirely confined to their own party.

Worldly observers, of the better sort, cannot sometimes but perceive in the same class of religionists, less forbearance in their temper, less patience, less moderation and kindness, than they themselves evince; they also remark in some of them, though it is doubtless done with a view not to subtract from their charities, less generosity and largeness of heart than they see in many of their own class; a petty strictness in their dealings, not quite of a piece with the liberality, I had almost said, with the honesty, of Christianity. Unhappily, they are kept on their guard in the unnecessary dread of being righteous overmuch, by the very peculiarities which, in these persons, indicate a defect rather than a redundancy. These indications, however, which they conceive to be the distinctive marks of the whole tribe, make them stand aloof from Christians of the sounder class, in whom they might have seen, on a nearer approach, a fair and lovely exhibition of the principle by which they are governed.

Another preventing cause of improvement is, their associating familiarly with persons of less worth than themselves. This is injurious in two ways;—These sober followers of pleasure sanction its thoughtless devotee by the influence of their respectable character, and give weight to those who would otherwise have none, while, at the same time, they cannot but feel their own decided superiority to those with whom their complaisance unites them; and when they compare themselves with characters so defective, they are in danger of resting still more satisfied with their own moderate, though higher, standard. But, to be conscious of being better than those who are bad, is no very solid ground either of comfort or credit.

There is another co-operating cause which keeps down the growth of piety. They are conversant with various classes of writers on different subjects, who do not indeed go farther in their disregard of religion than to let it alone; if they avowedly attacked it, the persons in question would take the alarm, and avoid the perusal of works obviously pregnant with evil. These writers do not always oppose it, but they have nothing to do with it; they virtually say, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Christianity. We are far from meaning that religion ought to be, or that it can, with propriety, be obtruded into subjects of a totally distinct nature. Yet, if its subtle and pervading principle were mixed up with the other ingredients in the mind of the author, the penetrating spirit would occasionally break through, not in matter, but in essence. Where this feeling exists in the heart, a ray of light will sometimes fall unconsciously on subjects which have no immediate connexion with it. In a cloudy day, though you do not see the body of the sun, you know, from the light it emits, that it is in its proper station.

But the writers to whom we allude, take other ground; they set out with other views; their ethics have another cast. There is a pretty strong implication, especially in compositions of some of our modish itinerants, how good men may be independent of religion. In writers of a sounder cast, though also with these amusement be the professed object, with whatever flowers they strew the path, they entice you into no morasses; you always feel there is a bottom. You go on as much entertained as if you were misled. The pleasure of an uncorrupted mind is not diminished by feeling himself safe, nor is it interrupted while he is gratifying his fancy, by being obliged to watch that no trap is laid for his principles.

To explain, by one or two instances:—Clarendon's and Burnet's histories of their own times no more profess to be religious works, than the histories of Hume or Smollet. They were written by men of different political parties, of different professional engagements. Yet, though treating on subjects which naturally excluded any formal descants on religion, there is a predominating tendency which discloses the principles of both; which affords a pledge of their general principles; which makes the reader feel himself safe, because it assures him he is in the hands of a christian historian.

Again;—In travelling to the Hebrides with Johnson, it is no small thing to find, that we can be delighted without being in danger. The tourist, without stepping out of his way to hunt for moral remark, or religious suggestion, never

forgets that he is a Christian moralist; though in quest of mere amusement, we find our minds enriched with some just sentiment, fortified with some sound principle.

But, in the modish school, the traveller presents his benevolent man, the novelist his perfect character, the moralist his philosopher, the poet his hero, with principles, if not always elaborately in opposition to, yet thoroughly unconnected with, the Christian scheme. It is rather a silent counter-working of its necessity than an overt attack on its truth, for this strong measure is now less resorted to, as more repulsive and less successful. Neglect answers the end better than opposition. The longer any thing is kept out of sight, the less irksome its absence becomes, till from feeling it not necessary, we proceed to think it not real. The traces of right principle grow faint in the mind, when perpetually hid by interposing objects. The misfortune is, these works make up the larger part of the study of many readers, who do not so much desire to get rid of a stricter scheme, as to lose the perception that they have it not, and the remembrance that, perhaps, they once had it.

CHAP. XVII.

The inquiry, why some good sort of people are not better, continued.

There is one prominent cause which assists in preventing the persons considered in the preceding chapter from making any material proficiency; and it is the very cause, which, if it had been rightly directed, would probably, in such minds have led to a contrary end—their choice of *religious* reading; it is, confining their pious studies exclusively and systematically to that low standard of divinity, which has cramped the growth of many well-disposed persons. The beginning of the last century first presented us with this lax theology; which, though it has still its advocates and followers, they are, we trust, daily declining in numbers and in credit. The excess to which this deteriorated Christianity has been carried in a recent academical exhibition of '*Christian Liberty*,' and especially in a late series of theological '*Hints*,' by a professor of the law, has, it is to be hoped, produced a good effect. When an evil has touched its ultimate point, may we not presume, that the practice may make a gradual retrocession to sound principle? In these, and similar writers, no one but sees that the road to heaven is made far more smooth and easy than the Scriptures have made it; so smooth as to invite many and advance none; so easy that not only, as in the old code, those who run may read, but those who sleep may conquer.

But what still renders this meagre divinity unfortunately too acceptable, is, that it teaches a complacency in our own goodness, that goodness, the acquisition of which is rendered easy, because it falls in so readily with our natural corruptions. The truth is, we require less to be excited to the practice of some insulated virtues which these authors do not neglect to recommend, than to the abasing of that pride which they rather foster than correct When we hear so much of the dignity of human nature, we secretly exult in our participation of that dignity; we take to ourselves a full share of that stock of excellence lavishly attributed to our species, and are ready to exclaim, *and I, too, am a man!* These writers make their way to the affections by a plausibility of manner which veils the shallowness of their reasoning. But the great engine of success, as we have already observed, is the prudent accommodation of the reasoning to the natural propensities of the heart, and the flattering the very evils, the existence of which they yet deny. The reader welcomes the doctrines which put him in good humour with himself; he cordially credits the prophesier of smooth things, and is pleased in proportion as he is not alarmed. That which does not go to the root of the evil—evil which cannot be cured without being disturbed—that which does not irritate the patient, by laying open the peccant part, will be naturally acceptable.

These writers are too much disposed to address their readers as if they were already religious; as requiring, indeed, to be reminded, but not as requiring to be alarmed; as expecting commendation for what they are, rather than admonition as to what they ought to be. They take for granted, what in some cases requires proof, that all are Christians, not in profession, but in reality; and the same uniform class of instructions, or rather of gratuitous positions, is directed to the whole mass, without any individual searchings of the heart, without any distinct address, any discriminating application to that variety of classes of which society is compounded. To the profligate, liver or the more decent sensualist; to the sceptical moralist, or the careless believer; to all, perhaps, if we might except that most hatred heretic, the fanatical over-believer, is the one soothing panegyric, or the one frigid admonition, addressed. We do not pretend to say that virtue is not recommended, but as Seneca and Antoninus had recommended it before, so they had done it better, less vaguely, and more pointedly. Many of the virtues, by the practice of which the readers are taught that salvation is to be obtained, they cannot but feel to be their own virtues; this, while it sets their apprehensions at rest, naturally fills them with complacency in their actual character, instead of kindling an ardent desire after higher attainments.—Vices, from which they must be conscious they are exempt, and which they have as little excitement as occasion to practice, are properly censured: but the evil dispositions of the heart, which if insisted on and pointedly laid open, would set them upon examining their own, are passed over, or lightly treated, or softened down into natural weakness, pardonable imperfection, or accidental infirmity. The heart is not considered as the perennial fountain of all actual offence and error.

A theology which depresses the standard, which overlooks the motives, which dilutes the

doctrines, softens the precepts, lowers the sanctions, and mutilates the scheme of Christianity; which merges it in undefined generalities, which makes it consist in a system of morals which might be interwoven into almost any religion—for there are few systems of religion which profess to teach immorality; a theology which neither makes Jesus Christ the foundation, nor the Holy Spirit the efficient agent, nor inward renovation a leading principle, nor humility a distinguishing characteristic; which insists on a good heart, but demands not a renewed heart; which inserts virtues into the stock of the old nature, but insists on the necessity of a changed nature;—such a theology is not that which the costly apparatus of Christianity was designed to present to us. If it teaches that we have virtues to attain and imperfections to be cured, it insinuates that the one may be attained by our own strength, and the other cured without divine assistance. Our faults, if we have any, are to be surmounted by our reason, and our virtues to be improved from a regard to our comfort and the advancement of our credit; for the satisfaction they afford, and the reputation they procure us. The good man of these writers, like the good man of the ancient Stoics, is so full of virtue as to leave no room for repentance, so faultless that humility would be affectation. Like them they seem almost to diminish the distance between their Maker and themselves, by exalting the man and lowering the Deity.

The persons in question frequently read the Scriptures, and we are ready to wonder that in reading them they do not perceive their disagreement with the authors to whom we allude. There, all the doctrines overlooked by them, are pressed in every page; but whether they read without remarking the difference, or whether, though in the use (as we hope) of daily prayer, they neglect to implore that divine Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, to direct the truths they contained to their hearts; they do not seem to enter into the grand peculiarities of the Gospel; nor into the personal interests they have in the doctrines it inculcates, and the precepts it enforces. How many read the account of the fall of Adam, as an historical fact, of which they never entertained a doubt, yet without feeling any more individual concern in it, than in the fall of Babylon; without being sensible of any corresponding contamination in their own hearts. When told of the self-denying doctrines which Christianity includes, they triumphantly produce passages, not only from Solomon and St. Paul, but from the Saviour himself, which completely contradict such gloomy assertions, *that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;* that *Christ's commands are not grievous;* that *his yoke is easy*, with a multitude of the same animating strain. But they produce them, not so much because they are indeed most delightful truths, as because they are supposed to annul such less engaging texts as are descriptive of *the strait gate*, and *the narrow way*, and *the few who enter them;* of the difficulty with which the rich, that is, those who trust in riches, shall attain to heaven; that *taking up the cross* is an indispensable qualification for the followers of him who suffered on it, with an endless multitude of similar passages.

Now the truth is, there is not the slightest disagreement between these two classes of texts. The unqualified peace, joy, and comfort, expressed in the former, represent what religion is in herself, describe her native excellence, her genuine beauty, her original perfection. Whereas the difficulties attached to the second class arise necessarily from the depravity of the will, that alienation from God and goodness, which renders that irksome which is in itself delightful. To him who knows, because he feels, that natural reluctance of the heart to the requisitions of a religion calculated to produce these happy effects, there is a perfect congruity between the passions thus set in opposition. Though both are true, each is consistent with the other; but their truth and consistency strike not those who reject or adopt what best suits their creed or their convenience.

They know, indeed, that they must give a nominal assent to the doctrine of divine assistance, because it is said to be a doctrine of that Scripture which they believe; but they assent to it with implicitness, rather than conviction, and if they do allow the intervention of the Holy Spirit, they attach an undue value to human agency. If they say, they are far from excluding heavenly aid, their assent somewhat resembles that of the Welch captain, who, when Henry the Fifth, after the battle of Agincourt, ascribed exclusively the victory to God, coolly replied, 'indeed he did us great good.'

But many of the writers to whom we have adverted, and by whom the persons in question are influenced, seem to make their reverence for the Scriptures a ground for disallowing the agency of the Spirit; as if there were not the most perfect agreement between an appeal to the one and a belief in the other. The Spirit of God leads us to no new instructor, but only points us to his word, teaching us to discern it more clearly and to receive it more affectionately. That would be, indeed, an illusion, not an illumination, which would direct us to derive our instruction from any other fountain than the oracles of truth.

These persons are striking instances how dexterously we contrive to turn the scale in our own favour, by balancing some lesser fault to which we are not inclined, against some strongly besetting wrong propensity. We seldom soften down any precept that is not pointed at our particular temptation. All the other laws we allow to be not only good and holy, but just, for they only affect other people. The young man in the Gospel had no objection to those commandments which were suggested to him as the rule of duty; for he was chaste and honest, neither a disobedient son nor a murderer, neither addicted to idolatry nor profaneness; but the command to dispossess himself of his fortune for charitable purposes cut deep, for he was not only rich but avaricious. It is thus we prevaricate with duty. We would warp the precept to our passions, instead of bending our inclinations to the duty. We lament the harshness of the command, when we should be lamenting the perversity of the will.

A ow standard of religion flatters our vanity, 's easily acted up to, does not wound our self-love, is practicable without sacrifices, and respectable without self-denial. It allows the implantation of virtues without irradicating vices; recommends right actions without expelling wrong principles, and grafts fair appearances upon unresisted corruptions.

This low tone of religion is rendered still more acceptable, from being sprinkled with frequent vituperations of that species of Christianity now derided by a term which was once considered as its specific character. This term, what with the too monopolizing adoption of it by one description of persons, and the contemptuous implication conveyed in the use of it by another, we almost fear to use lest we should be conjuring up the spirit of fanaticism in the minds of the latter class, or vindicating its exclusive adoption in the language of the former. The assumption of names on the one hand, and, if I may venture so vulgar a phrase, calling names on the other, have been of infinite disservice to religion. Such is the new meaning now assigned to old terms, that we doubt if the application of the epithet in question would not excite a sneer, if not a suspicion, against the character of Isaiah himself, were we to name him by his ancient denomination *the Evangelical prophet.* This laconic term includes a diatribe in a word. It is established into a sweeping term of derision of all serious Christians, and its compass is stretched to such an extent, as to involve within it every shade and shape of real or fictitious piety, from the elevated but sound and sober Christian, to the wildest and most absurd fanatic; its large inclosure takes in all, from the most honourable heights of erudition to the most contemptible depths of ignorance. Every man who is serious, and every man who is silly, every man who is holy, and every man who is mad, is included in this comprehensive epithet. We see perpetually that solidity, sublimity, and depth, are not found a protection against the magic mischief of this portentous appellation.

It gratifies us to be assured that our own tone is sufficiently high, and that, whatever is higher, is erroneous, or superfluous, or hypocritical or ridiculous. This it is which attaches many a reader to the opposite style of writing, and in proportion as it attaches him, by reconciling him more to himself, animates him more fiercely against those who make higher requisitions of faith and holiness, those who strip off the mask from actions unfounded in principle, who exact self-abasement, who insist on the necessity of good works, not as a meritorious ground of salvation, but as an evidence of obedience to God, and of conformity to Christ.

Most sincerely do we believe, that there is nothing which the better sort of this class dread more than hypocrisy. But do they not sometimes dread the imputation almost as much as the thing? And is it not to be feared that, with the dread of this odious vice being imputed to them, is a little connected the suspicion of its existence in all who go farther than themselves? Are they not too ready to accuse of want of sincerity or of soberness, every one who rises above their own level? Is not every degree of warmth in their pious affections, every expression of zeal in their conversation, every indication of strictness in their practice, construed into an implication, that so much as this zeal and strictness exceed their own, there is in them just so much error as that excess involves?

By the class of writers to which they are attached, the pious affections are branded as the stigma of enthusiasm. But a religion which is all brain, and no heart, is not the religion of the Gospel. The spirit there exhibited is as far removed from philosophical apathy, as from the intemperate language of passion. There are minds so constituted, and hearts so touched, that they cannot meditate on the incarnation of the Son of God, his voluntary descent from the glory which he had with his Father from all eternity, his dying for us men and for our salvation—with the same unmoved temper with which they acknowledge the truth of any other fact. A grateful feeling, excited by these causes, is as different from a fanatical fervor as it is from a languid acknowledgment. It is not energy, however, which is reprobated, so much as the cause of its excitement. Should the zealous Christian change the object of his admiration, should he express the same animated feeling for Socrates, which the other had expressed for his Saviour, his enthusiasm would be ascribed to his good taste, and the object would be allowed to justify the rapture.

But, is not objecting to earnestness in religion to strike out the catalogue of virtues that quality which so eminently distinguished the scripture worthies? Is it not denying that 'spirit of power and of love' which it is worth observing, the Apostle makes the associate of 'a sound mind,' to deny that Christianity ought to make an impression on the heart, and if on the heart on the feelings? These fastidious critics place, what they call the abstract truths of religion, on the same footing with abstract truths in science; they allow only the same intellectual conviction of truth, the same cool assent, in the one case, which is given to a demonstration in the other. But would not he be thought a defective orator at the bar, or in the senate, who should plead as if he did not know that men had feelings to be touched as well as understandings to be convinced; who considered the affections as the only portion of character to which he must be careful not to advert, in addressing beings who are feeling as well as intelligent? Shall a fervent rhetoric be admired in one orator, when pleading for the freedom of men, and reprobated in another, when pleading for their salvation? Shall we be enraptured with the eloquent advocate for the Agrarian law, and disgusted with the strenuous advocate for the everlasting Gospel? Shall not one man be allowed the same earnestness in combating unbelief, which has immortalized another in execrating Verres?

It must, assuredly, be maintained, that there is such a sober mode of exhibiting truth, as may show that the sacred messenger has no delight in declaring that part of his message which yet it is his duty to deliver; which, while it cannot fail to call forth every feeling of interest for the souls of men, at the same time demands the utmost tenderness, as treating of their dangers

Tenderness, it is true, must not alter truth, nor conceal menaces, which make an awful part of it. Yet a difference may be sometimes inferred by the manner of delivering them.—Who has not heard a holy man, who, feeling himself bound to declare the whole counsel of God, has denounced his solemn judgments with a subdued voice, and an almost hesitating accent; speaking as one who felt that he was acquitting himself of a painful but bounden duty;—while another of a coarser make, and a less mortified spirit, proclaims the commanded threat in all the thunders of Sinai; seeming, by his tone and gesture, to rejoice that it has fallen to his lot to alarm, and not to console? The one 'persuades men' because he knows 'the terrors of the Lord;' the other seems to have his own gratification in terrifying. The one evidently rejoices in being the ambassador of reconciliation, the other appears, but is not, we are assured, really, glad to bear the mandate of condemnation.

But, to return to writers in the extreme of the other class. Vague essays on general and undefined morality, which we here venture to represent as their fault, are very different from distinct discourses or treatises on the several virtues; these latter flow from the study, and teach the improvement of the human heart. But to produce their effect, they must produce their commission. The proclamation must always have the broad seal of Christianity appended to it. It is indeed not only unnecessary, but impossible and imprudent, that in every discourse the whole scheme of Christian doctrine should be laid open. An attempt to do this has frequently produced confusion, by crowding in more materials than the space will contain; and thus leaving the stamp of no one truth distinct upon the mind. We mean no more, than that the general impression made, should be, that the moral quality under discussion should appear to be explicitly derived from the school of Christ, and the reader not be left to exercise his ingenuity in conjecturing, till the closing sentence informs him, to what system of religion it belongs.

It is also perfectly proper to cut the circle of the virtues into segments, provided it be shown how they are connected with each other, and how the whole fall within the circumference of that divine religion which is their proper centre. It were also to be wished, that there were no undue and hyperbolical exaltation of the virtue under consideration, which often makes a part stand for the whole. This exclusive praise of the quality inculcated, is, to Christianity, what it would be to general geography, if, in order to give an idea of our world, a map of a single country should be exhibited without coast or boundary. It differs from the Christian exhibition of moral virtues, as this insulated map would differ from a chart of the same country when delineated on the globe; there you see not only the country itself correctly displayed, but you perceive by what sea it is bordered, on what land it touches, into what other country some points of this cut deep, and how narrow are the bounds which separate it from some hostile neighbour; you see, also, its dependance on every thing about it, and its relative situation on the earth.

If we might be allowed another illustration, we would observe, that, to expect to give a just idea of Christianity by any quality, as detached from the whole, would be to resemble a certain Athenian, who having a palace to sell, took out a single brick from the wall, and produced it at the auction as a specimen of the edifice.

Nor, as we humbly conceive, is it a superfluous care, so to contrive, as that, when it is right to expose any vice to reprobation, the reader who is exempt from it may not too much plume himself upon the exemption.—A venerable clergyman once assured the author, that he had never done so much mischief as by the best sermon he had ever preached. It was against the sin of drunkenness. It happened to be an offence to which none of his auditors happened to be addicted.—After it was over, some of them expressed no small triumph at their own secure state, from a consciousness of being free from the vice which had been so well exposed, and, as if the exercise of no virtue but the one opposite to the sin in question had been necessary, they went home exulting in their own superior goodness.

The writers to whom we have been referring, triumphantly distinguish themselves by the appellation of *practical*, in studied opposition to those who are professedly doctrinal. Let it however, be observed, that, maintaining a due respect for the conscientious of both classes, we only presume to allude, in our animadversions, to those of either side, who carry their specific characteristics into an extreme in which each excludes its opposite. But far more deficient are the practical discussions of the one, if they want the solid weight and metal of the Gospel to make them sterling, than the doctrinal dissertations of the other; which, however, ought never to want the intelligible superscription of practical remark to render them current.—Yet is there not sometimes a misnomer in the former appellation? Can that writing be called truly practical which does not attempt greatly to raise the tone of conduct, which does not press practice home on the conscience as flowing from the highest principle, and directed to the noblest end; which is not urged on that ground of argument that is the most cogent, not inferred from that motive which is the most irresistible, nor impressed by that authority best calculated to secure obedience? The nature of the action commonly participates in the nature of the motive. Practice is not likely to rise higher than the spring which set it a-going.

At the same time, it is but fair to confess, that much of that species of composition which assumes a more spiritual character, is sometimes lamentably deficient in this good requisite. It begins not seldom, by laying a good and solid foundation; but when we lift our eyes to look upon the structure which we expected to see raised upon it, we find it negligently run up, if not totally omitted. Practice seems to be considered as a thing of course, not necessary to be insisted on, much less to have its path clearly chalked out. The use to be made of the doctrine which has been delivered, is turned over to the piety or ingenuity of the reader, without any specific direction, or personal application.

Too much is left for him to supply, which, perhaps, implicitly leaning on his guide, he will not supply, or which, from want of knowledge, he cannot.

Far be it from our intention, however, in thus venturing with real diffidence to compare the faulty extremes in both cases, to assimilate at all their nature or their tendency :—the extreme of adherence to doctrine frequently springing from the deepest sense of the infinite importance of that doctrine, and accompanied with a pious willingness to spend and be spent, in its propagation. The extreme of adherenee to what is called mere morality, is too often the lamentable effeet of ignorance of doctrine, and of an interest neither felt, nor possessed, nor desired in doctrinal blessings.

With this guard distinctly kept in view, we venture, with all humility, to repeat, that there is an extreme on both sides : the one may be abstractedly considered as all propositions, the other as all conclusions. The one fails of effect by not depending on just premises ; in the other, well established premises produce inferior good, because the conclusions are not sufficiently brought to bear on the aetual demands of life. The one, while he powerfully shows the reader that he is a sinner, limits both his proof and his instruction to one or two prominent doctrines ; he names, indeed, with unwearied iteration, that only name by which we can be saved, faithfully dwells on the efficacy of the divine remedy, but without clearly pointing out its application to practical purposes. The other presumes his readers to be so wise, as to be able to supply their own deficiencies, or so good, as to stand in little need of supernatural assistance. Is it not mocking human helplessness, to tell men they must be holy, good, and just, without directing them to the prineiple from whence 'all holy thoughts, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed'—to direct the stream of action, and keep out of sight the spring from which it must flow—to expeet they will renounee sin if they do not renounee self—to send them vagrant in search of some stray virtue, without showing them where to apply for direction to find it ?

The combination of the opposite but indispensable requisites is most happily exemplified in all our best divines, living and dead ; and, blessed be God, very numerous in the catalogue in both instances. They have, with a large and liberal construction, followed that most perfect exemplification of this union, which is so generally exhibited in Scripture, more particularly in that express model, the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians. There, every thing that is excellent in practice is made to proceed from Him 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' There, every act has its inspiring motive, every virtue its radical principal ; falsehood is not only prohibited to the converts, but the prohibition is accounted for, '*because* ye have put on the new man.' The obedience of wives, the affection of husbands, the submission of children, all is to be done 'in the name of the Lord Jesus.'—Servants are enjoined to fidelity as 'fearing God.' 'Mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering,' are recommended, *because* the converts 'are the elect of God.' Every inhibition of every wrong practice has its reference to Christ, every act of goodness its legitimate principle. Contentions are forbidden forgiveness is enjoined, on the same high ground—the example of 'Him in whom dwell eth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.—This is *practical preaching*—This is *evangelical preaching*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Thoughts respectfully suggested to good sort of people.

In perusing the foregoing chapter, it may be, as it has been, with unweared repetition, objected, that it is equally preposterous and unjust, to hold out a standard of religion and morals so high, as to defeat, in the reader, all hope of attaining it. It may be urged, that it would be more prudent, as well as more useful, to propose a more moderate standard, and to suggest a more temperate measure, which would not, as in the present case, by discouraging, render attainment hopeless. For an answer, we must send them to the Redeemer's own mouth, to the excision of the right hand, the plucking out the right eye. This it will be justly insisted, is not a command, but a metaphor. Granted.—We know we are not commanded to lop off our limbs, but our corruptions. But, would He who is not only true, but THE TRUTH, adopt a stong metaphor to express a feeble obligation ? Is any tone, then, may we not ask, too high, if not higher than that uniformly employed in the Bible ? What do we mean, when we say, that we receive the Gospel as a rule of faith and practice, if, having made the declaration, we instantly go, and, without scruple, lower the rule, and depress the practice ?

High and low are indefinite terms : their just use depends on the greatness or littleness of the objects to which they refer. When we consider, that the object in question is eternal life, should the standard which God has made the measure of our attaining to it, be so depressed as to prevent that attainment ? Do not the Apostles and their Master, the Saints and the King of Saints, every where suggest a rule, not only of excellence, but perfection ; a rule to the adoption of which no hopelessness of attainment is to prevent our stretching forward ?

Scripture does, indeed, every where represent us as incompetent without divine assistance. But does it not every where point out where our strength lies ; where it is to be sought ; how it is to be obtained ? It not only shows where our wants may be supplied, but our failures pardoned. Does any one doctrine, any one preeept, of the Gospel, deal in emollients, prescribe palliatives, suggest petty reliefs, point out inferior remedies, speak of any medicine, but such as is proportioned to the depth of the disease ?

Yet it is not uncommon for those whose views have been low, and whose practice, con

sequently, has not been high, to combine with this mediocrity of character the most exalted expectation of future recompence: to couple a comparatively low faith and conduct with those lofty promises which the New Testament holds out to the most exalted Christian. Many in the day of health and activity would have considered taking up the cross,' 'living to him who died for them,' &c. &c. as figurative expressions, lively images, not exacting much practical obedience; nay, would have considered the proposal of bringing them into action as downright enthusiasm; yet who has not heard these persons, in a dangerous sickness, repeat with entire self-application the glorious and hard-earned exultation of him, who, after unrivalled sufferings and unparalleled services, after having been 'in deaths oft,' after having been even favoured with a glimpse of heaven, exclaims, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,' and then go on with the most delusive complacency, to apply to themselves the sublime apostrophe with which this fine exclamation is wound up—'henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory,' &c. &c.: and it has passed into an accredited phrase, when one of this sort of Christians speaks of the death of another in the same class, to observe, with an air of triumph, that *he is gone to his reward.* We must confess, that when we hear this assurance so applied, we charitably incline to hope it is not so bad with them as the expression implies; because, if heaven is thus assigned as a payment of work done, one cannot help trembling at a reward apportioned to such worth. For these contractors for heaven, who bring their merit as their purchase-money, and intend to be saved at their own expense, do not always take care to be provided with a very exorbitant sum, though they expect so large a return in exchange for it; while those who, placing no dependence on their works, never dare to draw upon heaven for the payment, will often be found to have a much larger stock upon hand, ready to produce as an evidence, though they renounce them as a claim. In both cases, is it not better to transfer them and ourselves from merit to mercy, as a more humble and less hazardous ground of dependance?

Far be from me the uncharitable presumption, that these sanguine persons are destitute of principle, or void of right intentions. Doubtless, in many instances, they persevere in error for no reason, but because they believe it to be truth. There is even much that is right in them; but are they not too easily satisfied with a low measure of that right, without examining accurately the quality of the practice, merely because it is not disreputable?

Our knowledge of religion and sound morals must inevitably arise, in a good measure, from the knowledge of ourselves. Now, the kind of reading of which we have complained, is so far from improving that knowledge, that it keeps it out of our sight, by representing us to ourselves as other creatures than we really are. The most ingenious abstract reasoning on man will not show him what sort of being he is, if he be not taught to know it within himself. He must seek it in the depths of his own mind, and compare what he finds there with the unerring law of God. The facts he might deduce, and the experiments he might make from the study of both in conjunction, would teach him either to confirm or correct his theory; his experience, if it did not establish, would overturn his speculations, and he would begin to build on new ground.

May we not be allowed with all tenderness and respect, not with the arrogance of any superiority, but such as is the inevitable fruit of long observation, to suggest a few of the many remedies against the evils we have been regretting? The true preliminary to vital religion is to feel and acknowledge our lapsed humanity. There is no entrance into the temple of Christianity but through this lowly vestibule. All the dissertations of the most profound philosophers on the reasonableness and beauty of our religion, on its excellence and superiority, are but a fruitless exercise of ingenuity and eloquence, if they exclude this fundamental truth. The ablest writer, if he does not feel this conviction in his own heart, will never carry it to yours. But if you have once got over this hard and humbling introduction, the same divine guide who has given this initiatory opening, will, to the patient and persevering inquirer, perfect the work he has so happily begun.—While he who turns over the page of his own virtues, and ransacks the catalogue of his good actions, will find that, under the pretence of seeking consolation, he is evading instruction; he is only heaping up materials for building confidence in himself—'by that sin fell the angels'—and may be in little less danger than the flagitious offender. Our Lord has decided on this momentous question, by his preference of the self-abasing penitent who had nothing to ask but mercy, to him who had nothing to request but praise; of the lowly confessor of his offences to the pompous recounter of his virtues; whose prayer, if self-panegyric deserves that name, plainly declares that he already possessed so much, that there was nothing left for him to ask. Our Saviour took this occasion to let us see, that he is better pleased when we show him our wants, than our merits.

As you do not live in the practice or the allowance of vices, which make it your interest to wish that Christianity may be false, and as you believe its external evidences, endeavour to gain also an internal conviction that it is true. Examine also into the principle of your best actions. Even some who have made a more considerable proficiency, are too apt to defer examining into the motive, till they have concluded the act which the motive should have determined; they then, as it were, make up the motive to the act, and bring about the accordance in a way to quiet their own minds. Perhaps interest is acting on an opinion which we fancied that wisdom had suggested. If it succeed, we compliment ourselves on the event; if it fail, we applaud ourselves on the assigned, because we are not quite sure of the real motive.

The way to make a progress in piety and peace, is not to be too tender of our present feelings; is nobly to make some sacrifice of immediate ease, for the sake of acquiring future happiness. Desire not opiates, seek not anodynes,

when your internal constitution requires stimulants. Cease to conceive of religion as a stationary thing; be assured, that to be available, it must be progressive. Read the Scriptures, not as a form, but as God's great appointed means, of infusing into your heart that life-giving principle which is the spring of all right practice. Cultivate every virtue, but rest not in any. Do every thing to deserve the esteem of men, but make not that esteem your governing principle. Value not most those qualities which are the most popular. Correct your worldly wisdom with 'the wisdom which is from above.' Bear in your recollection, that to minds of a soft and yielding cast, the world is a more formidable enemy than those two other rival tempters which the New Testament commonly associates with it, and which would not, generally, have made a third in such corrupt company, if its dangers had not borne some proportion to theirs. It is the more necessary to press this point, as the mischiefs of the world are felt without being suspected. The other two spiritual enemies seize on the more corrupt; but the better disposed are the unconscious victims of the world, which frequently betrays its votary into the hands of its two confederates. People are inclined to be pleased with themselves when the world flatters them; they make the world their supreme arbiter; they are unwilling to appeal from so lenient a judge; and being satisfied with themselves, when its verdict is in their favour, the applause of others too often, by confirming their own, supercedes an inquiry into their real state.

The unconfirmed Christian should attend to his conduct just in those points which, though dishonest, are not dishonourable; points in which, though religion will be against him, the approbation of the world will bear him out. He would not do a disreputable thing, but should a temptation arise where his reputation is safe, there his trial commences, there he must guard himself with augmented vigilance.

The more enlightened the conscience becomes, the more we shall discover the unspeakable holiness of God. But our perceptions being cleared, and our spiritual discernment rendered more acute, this must not lead us to fancy that we are worse than when we thought so well of ourselves. We are not worse, because the growing light of divine truth reveals faults unobserved before to our view, or enlarges those we thought insignificant. Light does not create impurities, it only discloses them. Moreover, this efficient spirit does not illuminate without correcting; it is not only given for reproof, but amendment; not only for amendment, but consolation. Our unhappiness does not consist in that contrition which grows out of our new acquaintance with our own hearts. The true misery consisted in the blindness, presumption, and self-sufficiency, which our ignorance of ourselves generated. Our true felicity begins in our being brought, however severe be the means, to renounce our self-confidence, and cast ourselves entirely upon God.

It will be a good test of the improving state of a person of the above description, when he can patiently, though not at first pleasantly, persevere in the perusal of works which do not flatter his security; nay, to persevere the more earnestly, because the perusal discovers his own character to himself. When once he is brought to endure these salutary probings, he will soon be brought to court the hand that probes. He will begin to disrelish the vapid civility with which the superficial examiner treats human nature. Nay, he may now safely meditate on the *dignity* of man, which, in his former state, so far misled him. He will find that, in another sense, the doctrine is true. Man was indeed originally a dignified creature, for he was made in the image of the perfect God. Even now, though his will is depraved, yet he has noble intellectual faculties which give some notion of what he was. His heart is alienated, but his understanding approves the rectitude which his will rejects. He has still recoverable powers; he is still capable, when divine truth shall have made its full impression on his soul, of that renovation which shall restore him to the dignity he has lost, reinstate him in the favour he has forfeited, and raise him infinitely higher than the elevation from which he has fallen.

To those who attempt to relieve his temporary distress, by directing his eyes to his own virtues, and to the approbation those virtues are certain to obtain from heaven, he will reply with the illustrious sufferer of old, 'Miserable comforters are ye all!' Slight remedies will no longer satisfy him. The more deep his views become, the less he will be disposed to claim his share in the compliments lavished on the natural human character.

But, oh! what unspeakable consolation will the humble believer derive from the appellation by which the divine Spirit is designated—The Comforter. There is something sublimely merciful in a dispensation of which the term is so delightfully expressive of the thing.—We read in the Scriptures of *grieving* the Holy Spirit; but when we consider him under this most soothing character, is there not something of peculiar and heinous ingratitude in *grieving the Comforter.*

To endeavour to obtain a more lively belief in the existence, and earnestly to implore the aid of this quickening Spirit, would be a great means of improving the character. That the doctrine of spiritual influence is a practical doctrine, is clearly deducible from the command, arising out of the conviction, that the truth was already received—'If ye *live* in the Spirit, *walk* in the Spirit.' Observe that we press you only on your own principles: we recommend you only to act upon the creed you avow. If we suggest to your adoption any thing further than the Bible enjoins, we are guilty of fanaticism, and you should be on your guard against it. We venture not to say what name is due to those who would depress your views greatly below either.

In perusing the Scriptures, might you not commune with your own heart in something like the following language: 'The book is not a work of fancy. I do not, therefore, read it for amusement, but instruction; but am I seriously proposing to read it like one who has a deep interest in its contents? Is it my sincere inten-

tion to convert the knowledge I am about to acquire into any practical application to my own case? Is it my earnest wish to improve the state of my own heart by comparing it with what I allow to be the only perfect rule of faith and practice? Do I only read to get over my morning's task, the omission of which would make me uneasy, merely to fasten a series of facts on my memory? or do I really desire to make the great truths of the incarnation of the Son of God, of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of a living faith, a sound repentance, an entire conviction that, of myself I can do nothing; not merely a speculative system to be recognized at church, but to be transfused into the life? Do I adopt religion as an hereditary, national profession, necessary to my credit, or as a thing in which I have a momentous personal interest? Do I propose to apply what I read to the pulling down those high imaginations, and that false security of which my Bible shows me the danger, and which its doctrines are calculated to subdue? Do I labour after the attainment of those heavenly dispositions, the exhibition of which I have been admiring? Have these vivid declarations of the unsatisfactoriness of the world at all cooled my ardour for its enjoyments? Shall I read here this holy contempt for the littleness of its pursuits, this display of its fallacies and deceits, and yet return this very evening to the participation of diversions, the exposure of whose emptiness I have been approving? Shall I extol the writer who strips off its painted mask from the world, and yet acts as if the morning lecture had brought no such discovery? Nay, perhaps, it may be one of my subjects of conversation to recommend a book, of whose little efficacy in my own case I am giving a practical example.

Do I not periodically pray, 'Make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting,' and yet am I not as shy of the society of those who are distinguished for more than common sanctity, as if it carried contamination with it? And does not the very term convey to my mind a discreditable idea, compounded of fanaticism and hypocrisy?

After all, I may have been wrong. If respectability were security, the young ruler in the Gospel had been in no danger, for his attainments were above the ordinary standard, and his credit was probably high. It is time to come to something like certainty; to inquire, whether I do cordially believe what I should be ashamed not to profess; whether my religion lives in my memory or my heart, on my lips or in my life, in my profession or my practice? It is time to examine, whether I have much more distinct evidences of divine truth than those who do not acknowledge the Gospel to be a revelation from heaven; to inquire, why, if my understanding be somewhat more enlightened, such illumination is not more perceptible on my heart? Why the fruits of the Spirit,' so far from 'abounding' in me, scarcely appear, if those fruits are indeed 'love, peace, and joy in believing?'

Let not the fear of labour, or the dread of pain, prevent you from endeavouring to obtain a clear view of your state. Let not a pusillanimous apprehension of reproach or ridicule prevent your following up your convictions. There is not any thing that is unreasonable, much less any thing that is impossible, required: no degree of zeal, or measure of earnestness, but what you see every day exerted in a worse cause. Take your measure from the world, not in *what* you shall pursue, but in the energy with which you shall urge the pursuit. Only devote to religion as much time as the worldly devote to dissipation; only set your affections on Heaven as intensely as theirs are set upon earth, and all will be well: or take your measure from your former self; take at least as much pains to secure your eternal interests as you have formerly taken to acquire a language or an art. Read the word of inspiration with the same assiduity with which you have studied a favourite classic; strive with as much energy to acquire a thorough insight into the corruptions of your heart, and the remedy proposed for their cure, as you have exerted in studying the principles of your profession, or the mysteries of your calling. Inspect your consciences as accurately as your expences, be as frugal of your time as of your fortune, and as careful of your soul as of your credit. Be neither terrified by terms, nor governed by them.

In reading those heart-searching writers, whose principles are drawn from the source of all truth, and who are only to be trusted as they are analagous to it, be not offended with some strong expressions. They expressed forcibly what they felt powerfully. The revolting term of *sinner*, which has, perhaps, made you throw aside the book, as thinking it addressed only to the perpetrators of great crimes, as fitter language for the prisons and the hulks, than for the polished and the pleasing, is addressed to every one, however profound his knowledge, however decent his life, however amiable his manners, who lives without habitual reference to God Be more than honest, be courageous; boldly apply it to yourself. Though your character is unstained with any disgraceful vice, though you regularly fulfil many relative duties, yet if you are destitute of the prime duty, the love of God in Christ Jesus, you stand in need of such a forcible address as we have been supposing. The discovery will be no dishonour. The dishonour consists in not feeling your state, in not struggling against it; in not applying with humble fervour for assistance to the Fountain of grace and mercy.

Take comfort that you have great advantages over many others. You have few bad habits to retract; you have no scandalous vices to combat; you have already with certain persons acquired a degree of influence by your good qualities; with others, you have acquired it by your very defects, and, as you are not suspected of enthusiasm, your usefulness will not be impeded by having that suspicion to repel. You will continue to do, in many respects the same things which you did before. The exterior of your life may be in many points nearly the same. But, even the same actions will be done in another spirit and to another end. Religion will not convert you into misanthropes, insensible to all the dear affections which make life pleasant. It does not wish to send you with the

hermits of old to the deserts of Thebais, it only wishes you to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in your own families, and among your own connexions. Not one of the proper forms and harmless habits of polished society will be impaired, they will be rather improved by this mutation of the mind. Christian humility will be aiding all the best purposes of good breeding, while it will furnish a higher principle for its exercise. You may express this change in your character by what name you please, so that the change be but effected.—It is not what you are called, but what you are, which will make the specific distinction between the character you adopt, and that which you have quitted. You read the Bible now, but between reading it mechanically and spiritually, there is as much difference as between pouring a fluid on the ground and distilling it. The one 'cannot be gathered up, afterwards; from the other, we extract drop by drop, a precious and powerful essence.

Search, then, diligently, the word of eternal life, enriched and ennobled as it is with the chain and the accomplishment of its prophecies, with the splendor of its miracles; with the attestation of its martyrs, the consistency of its doctrines; the importance of its facts; the plenitude of its precepts; the treasury of its promises; the irradiations of the Spirit; the abundance of its consolations; the peace it bestows; the blessedness it announces; the proportion of its parts; the symmetry of the whole,—altogether presenting such a fund of instruction to the mind, of light to the path, of document to the conduct, of satisfaction to the heart, as demonstrably prove it to be the instrument of God for the salvation of man.

CHAP. XIX.

On Habits.

Habits are those powers of the mind which arise from a collection or rather a successive course of ordinary actions. As they are formed by a concatenation of those actions, so they may be weakened by frequent and allowed interruptions; and if many contiguous links are wilfully broken, the habits themselves are in danger of being totally demolished.

If we may be allowed to change the metaphor, we would observe that good habits produce a sound healthy constitution of mind; they are tonics which gradually, but infallibly, invigorate the intellectual man.—A silent course of habits is a part of our character or rather conduct, which in a great measure depends on industry and application; on self denial and watchfulness, on diligence in establishing right pursuits, and vigilance in checking such as are pernicious. Habit being an engine put into our hands for the noblest and most beneficial purposes; and being one, which, having the free command of our own faculties, we have a power to use and direct—a power, indeed, derived from God as all our other possessions are—yet having this power, it rests with ourselves whether we shall improve it by a vigorous exertion in a right bent, or whether we shall turn it against our Maker, and direct the course of our conduct to the offending, instead of pleasing God.

Habits are not so frequently formed by vehement incidental efforts on a few great occasions, as by a calm and steady perseverance in the ordinary course of duty. If this were uniformly followed up, we should be spared that occasional violence to our feelings, that agitating resistance, which, by wasting the spirits, leads more feeble minds to dread the recurrence, of the same necessity which induces a painful feeling, the consequence of negligence, even where there is real rectitude of heart; while the regular adoption of right habits, indented by repetition, establishes such a tranquillity of spirit, as contributes to promote happiness no less than virtue. The mind, like the body, gains robustness and activity by the habitual exercise of its powers. Occasional right actions may be caprice may be vanity, may be impulse, but hardly deserve the name of virtue, till they proceed from a principle which habit has moulded into a frame; then the right principle which first set them at work continues to keep them at it, and finally becomes so prevalent, that there is a kind of spontaneity in the act, which keeps up the energy, without constant sensible reference to the spring which first set it in motion. Good habits and good dispositions ripened by repetition into virtue, and sanctified by prayer into holiness. If we allow that vicious habits persisted in, lay us more and more open to the dominion of our spiritual adversary, can we doubt that virtuous habits acquire proportional strength from the superinduced aid of the Spirit of God?

The more uniform is our conformity to the rules of virtue and purity, the less we may require to be reminded of the particular influence of the motive. We need not, nor indeed can we, recur every moment to the exact source of the action; its flowing from an habitual sense of duty will generally explain the ground on which it is performed. If the heart is kept awake and alive in a cheerful obedience to God, the immediate motive of the immediate act is not likely to be a bad one. Many actions, indeed, require to be deliberated on, and whatever requires deliberation before we do it, demands scrutiny why we do it. This will lead to such an inquest into our motive as, if there be any want of sincerity in it, will tend to its detection.

Notwithstanding what has been urged above as to the exercise of constant assiduity in preference to mere occasional exertion, we would be understood to offer this counsel rather to the proficient than to the novice. As the beginnings are always difficult, especially to ardent spirits, such spirits would do well, particularly at their entrance on a more correct course, to select for themselves some single task of painful exertion, which, by bringing their mental vigour into full play, shall afford them so sensible an evidence of the conquest they have obtained, as will more than repay the labour of the conflict. A friend of the Author was so fully aware of the importance of thus taming an impatient temper, that she imposed upon herself the habit of beginning

even any ordinary undertaking with the most difficult part of it, instead of following the usual method of proceeding from the lower to the higher. If a language was to be learnt, she began with a very difficult author. If a scheme of economy was to be improved, she relinquished at once some prominent indulgence; if a vanity was to be cut off, she fixed on some strong act of self-denial which should appear a little disreputable to others, while it somewhat mortified herself. These incipient trials once got over, she had a large reward in finding all lesser ones in the same class comparatively light. The main victory was gained in the onset, the subsequent skirmishes cost little.

If it be said that the effort is too violent, the change too sudden, we apprehend the assertion is a mistake. When we have worked up ourselves, or rather are worked up by a superior agency to a strong measure, it becomes a point of honour, as well as of duty, to persist; we are ashamed of stopping and especially of retreating, though we have no witness but God and our own hearts. Having once persevered, the victory is the reward. A slower change, though desirable, has less stimulus, less animation, is less sensibly marked; we cannot recur, as in the other case, to the hour of conquest, nor have we so clear a consciousness of having obtained it.

But the conquest we have won we must maintain. The fruits of the initiatory victory may be lost, if vigilance does not guard that which valour subdued. If the relinquishment of evil habits is so difficult, it is not less necessary to be watchful, lest we should insensibly slide into the negligence of such as are good. What we neglect, we gradually forget. This guard against declension is the more requisite, as the human mind is so limited, that one object quickly expels another. A new idea takes possession as soon as its predecessor is driven out; and the very traces of former habits are effaced, not suddenly, but progressively; no two successive ideas being, perhaps, very dissimilar, while the last in the train will be of a character quite different, not from that which immediately preceded, but from that which first began to draw us off from the right habits; the impression continues to grow fainter, till that which at first was weakened, is at length obliterated.

If we do not establish the habit of the great statesman of Holland, to do only one thing at a time, we shall do nothing well; the whole of our understanding, however highly we may rate it, is not too much to give to any subject which is of sufficient importance to require an investigation at all; certainly is not great enough to afford being split into as many parts, as we may choose to take subjects simultaneously in hand. If we allow the different topics which require deliberation to break in on each other; if a second is admitted to a conference, before we had dismissed the first, as neither will be distinctly considered, so neither is likely to obtain a just decision. These desultory pursuits obstruct the establishment of correct habits.

But it requires the firm union of a sound principle with an impartial judgment to ascertain that the habit is really good, or the mischief will be great in proportion to the pertinacity. For who can conceive a more miserable state, than for a man to be goaded on by a long perseverance in habits, which both his conscience and his understanding condemn? Even if upon conviction he renounces them, he has a long time to spend in backing, with the mortification at last, to find himself only where he ought to have been at setting out.

Without insisting on the difficulty of totally subduing long-indulged habits of any gross vice, such as intemperance; we may remark, that it requires a long and painful process—and this even after a man is convinced of its turpitude, after he discovers evident marks of improvement—to conquer the habits of any fault, which, though not so scandalous in the eyes of the world, may be equally inconsistent with real piety.—Take the love of money for instance. How reluctantly, if at all, is covetousness extirpated from the heart, where it has long been rooted! The imperfect convert has a conviction on his mind, nay he has a feeling in his heart, that there is no such thing as being a Christian without liberality. This he adopts, in common with other just sentiments, and speaks of it as a necessary evidence of sincerity. He has got the whole christian theory by heart, and such parts of it as do not trench upon this long-indulged corruption, he more or less brings into action. But in this tender point, though the profession is cheap, the practice is costly. An occasion is brought home to him, of exercising the grace he has been commending. He acknowledges its force, he does more; he feels it. If taken at the moment, something considerable might be done; but if any delay intervene, that delay is fatal; for from feeling, he begins to calculate. Now there is a cooling property in calculation, which freezes the warm current that sensibility had set in motion. The old habit is too powerful for the young convert, yet he flatters himself that he has at once exercised charity and discretion. He takes comfort both from the liberal feeling which had resolved to give the money, and the prudence which had saved it, laying to his heart the flattering unction, that he has only spared it for some more pressing demand, which, when it occurs, will again set him on feeling, and calculating, and saving.

Some well-meaning persons unintentionally confirm this kind of error. They are so zealous on the subject of sudden conversion, that they are too ready to pronounce, from certain warm expressions, that this change has taken place in their acquaintance, while evident symptoms of an unchanged nature continue to disfigure the character. They do not always wait till an alteration in the habits has given that best evidence of an interior alteration. They dwell so exclusively on miraculous changes, that they leave little to do for the convert, but to consider himself as an inactive recipient of grace; not as one who is to exhibit, by the change in his life, that mutation, which the divine Spirit has produced on his heart. This too common error appears to arise, not only from enthusiasm, but partly from want of insight into the human character, of which habits are the ground-work, and in which right habits are not less the effect of.

grace for being gradually produced. We cannot, indeed, purify ourselves, any more than we can convert ourselves, it being equally the work of the Holy Spirit to infuse purity, as well as the other graces, into the heart; but it rests with us to exercise this grace, to reduce this purity to a habit, else the Scriptures would not have been so abundant in injunctions to this duty.

'We must hate sin,' says bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'in all its dimensions, in all its distances, and in every angle of its reception.' St. Paul felt this scrupulousness of Christian delicacy to such an extent, that, in intimating the commission of certain enormities to the church of Ephesus, he charged that *they should not be so much as named among them.* This great master in the science of human nature, a knowledge perfected by grace, was aware that the very mention of some sins might be a temptation to commit them; he would not have the mind intimate with the expression, nor the tongue familiar with the sound. He who knew all the minuter entrances, as well as the broader avenues to the corrupt heart of man, knew how much safer it is to avoid than to combat, how much easier the retreat than victory. He was aware, that purity of heart and thought, could alone produce purity of life and conduct.

From the unhappy want of this early habit of restraint, many, who are become sincerely pious, find it very difficult to extricate their minds from certain associations established by former habits. Corrupt books and evil communications have at once left a sense of abhorrence on their hearts, with an indelible impression on their memory. They find it almost impossible to get rid of sallies of imagination, which, though they once admired as wit, they now consider as little less than blasphemy. The will rejects them; but they cling to the recollection with fatal pertinacity. Vices, not only of the conduct, but of the imagination, long indulged, leave a train of almost inextinguishable corruptions behind them. These are evils of which even the reformed heart does not easily get clear. He who repents suddenly, will too often be purified slowly. A corrupt practice may be abolished, but a soiled imagination is not easily cleansed.

We repeat, that these rooted habits, even after the act has been long hated and discontinued, may persist in tormenting him who has long repented of the sin, so as to keep him to the last in a painful and distressing doubt as to his real state; but if this doubt continue to make him more vigilant, and to keep alive his humility, the uneasiness it causes may be more salutary than a greater confidence of his own condition. Many have complained, after years of sincere reformation, that they did not possess that peace and consolation which religion promises; not suspecting, that their long adherence to wrong habits may naturally darken their views and cloud their enjoyments. Surely the man whose mind has abandoned itself for years to improper indulgences has little right to complain, if bitterness accompany his repentance, if dejection break in on his peace. Surely he has little right to murmur, if those consolations are refused to him, which, in the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, are sometimes withheld from good men, who have never been guilty of his irregularities in conduct, who have never indulged his disorders of heart and mind. When we see holy men, to whom this cheerful confidence is sometimes denied, or from whom, in the agonies of dissolving nature, it is withdrawn, shall they whose case we have been considering, complain, if their's are not all halcyon days, if their closing hour is rather contrite than triumphant? But this, if it be not a state of joy, may be equally a state of safety.

The duty of keeping up this sense of purity is of great extent. One of the many uses of prayer is, that, by the habit of breathing out our inmost thoughts of God, the sense of his being, the consciousness of his presence, the idea that his pure eye is immediately upon us, imparts a temporary purity to the soul, which it vainly aims to maintain in an equal degree in its intercourse with mankind. The beatitude of the promised vision of God is more immediately annexed to this grace; and it is elsewhere said, 'that every one who hath this hope, purifieth himself, as He is pure.' The holy felicity of the creature is thus made to depend on its assimilation with the Creator. There is a beautiful intimation of the purity of God in the order of construction in the prayer taught by our Saviour. We pray that *his name may be hallowed*, that is, that our hearts, and the hearts of all men, may honour his holy name; may be deeply impressed with a sense of his purity and holiness, before we proceed to the subsequent petitions. We thus invest our minds with this preparatory sentiment in order to sanctify what we are about to implore. In addition to the necessity of stated prayer for the promotion of purity, it may be observed, that if, by habitual devotion, we bend our thoughts into that course, they will in time almost voluntarily pursue it. The good effect of prayer will, on our return to society, be much increased by the practice of occasionally darting up to heaven, a short ejaculation, a laudatory sentence, or some brief spontaneous effusion. This will assist to stir up the flame which was kindled by the morning sacrifice, and preserve it from total extinction before that of the evening is offered up. We may learn from the profane practice of some, that an ejaculation takes as little time, and obtrudes less on notice, than an oath or an exclamation. It implores in as few words, the same divine power for a blessing, whom the other obtests for destruction.

One great benefit of science is allowed to be derived from its habituating the mind to shake off its dependance upon sense. Devout meditation, in like manner, accustoms it not to fly for support to sensible and material things, but to rest in such as are intellectual and spiritual. By a general neglect of serious thinking, virtue is sometimes withered and decayed; in minds where it is not torn up by the roots, there remains in them that vital sap which may still, upon habitual cultivation, not only vegetate, but produce fruit.

One great obstacle to habitual meditation must not be passed over. It is the pernicious custom of submitting to the uncontrolled dominion of a roving imagination. This prolific faculty produces such a constant budding of

images, fancies, visions, conjectures, and conceits, that she can subsist plentifully on her own independent stock. She is perpetually wandering from the point to which she promised to confine herself when she set out; is ever roaming from the spot to which her powerless possessor had threatened to pin her down. We retire with a resolution to reflect: Reason has no sooner marshalled her forces, than this undisciplined run-away escapes from duty, one straggler after another joins the enemy, or brings home some foreign impertinence. While we meant to indulge only a harmless reflection, we are brought under subjection to a whole series of reveries of different characters and opposite descriptions. Fresh trains obliterate our first speculations, till the spirit sinks into a sort of deliquium. We have nothing for it, but resolutely to resist the enfeebling despot. Let us stir up some counteracting force: let us fly to some active employment which shall break the charm, and dissolve the pleasant thraldom. No matter what, so it be innocent and opposite. We shall not cure ourselves by the sturdiest resolution not to do this thing which is complained of, unless we compel ourselves to do something else. Courageous exertion is the only conqueror of irresolution: vigorous action the only supplanter of idle speculation.

Habits are not arbitrary systems and predetermined schemes. They are not always laid down deliberately as plans to be pursued, but steal upon us insensibly; insinuate themselves into a train of successive repetitions, till we find ourselves in bondage to them, before we are aware they have gotten any fast hold over us. But if rooted bad habits are of such difficult extirpation, that, as we have already observed, they not only destroy the peace of him who continues them, but embitter the very penitence of him who has forsaken them, there is a class of beings in whom they are not yet inveterate. If I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, never could they be employed to a more important purpose, than in representing to my youthful readers the blessedness of avoiding such habits now, as may take a whole life to unlearn.

O you to whom opening life is fresh, and gay, and tempting! you who have yet your path to choose, whose hearts are ingenuous, and whose manners amiable, in whom, if wrong propensities discover themselves, yet evil habits are not substantially formed—could you be made sensible, at a less costly price than your own experience, that though through the mercy of God, the long-erring heart may hereafter be brought to abhor its own sin, yet the once initiated mind can never be made to unknow its knowledge, nor to unthink its thoughts; can never be brought to separate those combinations which it once too fondly cherished:—how much future regret, how much incurable sorrow might you spare yourselves! If you would but reflect that though in respect of the past, you may become inwardly penitent, you cannot become as you now are, outwardly innocent, and that no repentance can restore your present happy ignorance of practised evil,—you would then keep clear of a bondage from which you perceive the older and the wiser do not, because they cannot, commonly emancipate themselves.

But, supposing a young man is so happy as to escape the grosser corruptions, yet, if he have a turn to wit and ridicule, he should be singularly on his guard against the false credit which ludicrous associations will obtain for him in certain societies. An indelicate but pointed jest, a combination of some light thought with some scriptural expression, a parody which makes a serious thing ridiculous, or a sober one absurd,—these are instruments by no means harmless, not only to him who handles them, but also in the hands of subalterns and copyists, who having, perhaps, no faculty but memory and seldom using memory but for mischief, retain with joy, and circulate from vanity, what was at first uttered with mere random thoughtlessness. Profane dunces are the busy echoes of the loose wit of others. With little talent for original mischief, but devoting that little to the worst purposes, they pick up a kind of literary livelihood on the stray sarcasms and fugitive bon mots of others, and are maintained on what the witty throw away. If even in the first instance there were nothing wrong in the thing itself, there is mischief in the connexion. Whatever serves to append a light thought to a serious one, is unsafe: both have, by frequent citation, been so accustomed to appear together that when, in a better frame of mind, the good one is called up, the corrupt associate never fails to present itself unbidden, and, like Pharaoh's blasted corn, devours the wholesome ear.

'Man,' says one of the most sagacious observers of man, Dr. Paley, 'is a bundle of habits.' The more we attend to them, the more distinctly we shall perceive those which are right, and the more dexterity we shall acquire in establishing them. In setting out in our moral course, we can make little progress, unless we suffer ourselves to be governed by certain rules; but when the rules are once worked into habits, they in a manner govern us. We lose the sense of that restraining power, which was at first unpleasant though self-imposed. To illustrate this by an instance;—The accomplished orator is not fettered by recurring to the laws of the grammarian, nor the canons of the dialectician, though it was by being habitually trained in their respective schools, that he acquired both his accuracy and argument. Yet, while he is speaking, it never occurs to him, that there are such things in the world as grammar or logic. The rules are become habits, they have answered their end, and are dismissed.

If we consider the force of habit on amusements: stated diversions enslave us more by the custom of making us feel the want of them, than by any positive pleasure they afford. By being incessantly pursued, they diminish in their power of delighting; yet such is the plastic power of habit and such the yielding substance of our minds, that they become arbitrary wants, absolute articles, not of luxury, but necessity. Strange! that what is enjoyed without pleasure cannot be discontinued without pain! The very hour when, the place where, the sight of those with whom they have been partaken, present associations which we feel a kind of difficulty

and uneasiness in separating. We are partly cheated into this imaginary necessity, by seeing the eagerness with which others pursue them. Yet if it were not an artificial necessity, a want not arising from the constitution of our nature, those would be unhappy who are deprived of them, or rather, who never enjoyed them. There is a respectable society of Christians among us who carry the restriction of diversions to the widest extent. Yet among the number of amiable, virtuous, and well instructed young Quakers, whom I have known, I have always found them as cheerful and as happy as other people. Their cheerfulness was perhaps more intellectual than mirthful; but their happiness never appeared to be impeded by complaints at the privation of pleasures to which habit had not enslaved them—a habit which, when carried too far, destroys the very end of pleasure, that of invigorating the mind by relaxing it.

It is a proof that the Apostle considered conversion in general a gradual transformation, when he spoke of the renewing of the inward man *day by day;* this seems to intimate that good habits, under the influence of the Spirit of God, are continually advancing the growth of the Christian, and conducting him to that maturity which is his consummation and reward. The grace of repentance, like every other, must be established by habit. Repentance is not completed by a single act, it must be incorporated into our mind, till it become a fixed state, arising from a continual sense of our need of it.—*Forgive us our trespasses* would never have been enjoined as a daily petition, if daily repentance had not been necessary for daily sins. The grand work of repentance, indeed, accompanies the change of heart; but that which is purified will not, in this state of imperfection necessarily remain pure.—While we are liable to sin, we must be habitually penitent.

A man may give evidence of his possessing many amiable qualities, without our being able to say, therefore, he is a good man. His virtues may be constitutional, their motives may be worldly. But when he exhibits clear and convincing evidence, that he has subdued all his inveterate bad habits, weeded out rooted evil propensities; when the miser is grown largely liberal, the passionate become meek, the calumniator charitable, the malignant kind; when every bad habit is not only eradicated, but succeeded by its opposite quality, we would conclude that such a change could only be effected by power from on high, we would not scruple to call that man religious. But, above all, there must be a change wrought in the secret course of our thoughts; without this interior improvement, the abandonment of any wrong practice is no proof of an effectual alteration. This, indeed, we cannot make a rule by which to judge others, but it is an infallible one by which to judge ourselves. Certain faults are the effects of certain temptations, rather than of that common depravity natural to all. But a general rectification of thought, a sensible revolution in the secret desires and imaginations of the heart, is perhaps the least equivocal of all the changes effected in us. This is no merely the cure of a particular disease, but the infusion of a sound principle of life and health, the general feeling of a renovated nature, the evidence of a new state of constitution.

Candid Christians, however, who know experimentally the power of habit, who are aware of the remainders of evil in the best men, will not rashly pronounce that he, who, while he is struggling with some long cherished corruption falls into an occasional abberation from the path he is endeavouring to follow, is therefore not religious.

If our bad habits have arisen from dangerous associations, we must dissolve the intercourse, if we would obviate the danger. Good impressions may have been made on the heart, yet the indulged thought, and especially the allowed sight of that object which once melted down our better resolutions, may melt them again. If we would conquer an invading enemy, we must not only fight him in the field, but cut off his provisions. It may be difficult, but nothing should repel the effort but what is impossible. Now in this there is no impossibility, because the thing not being placed out of our reach, there needs only the concurrence of the will. If we humour this wayward will, it is at our peril. What we persist in indulging, we shall every day find more difficult to restrain. Perhaps on our not resisting the very next temptation, will depend the future colour of our life—the very possibility of future resistance. That which is now in our power, may, by repeated rejection, be judicially placed beyond it. Infirmity of purpose produces perpetual relapses Temptation strengthens as resistance weakens We create, by criminal indulgences, an imbecility in the will, and then plead the weakness, not which we found, but made.—Half measures produce more pain and no success. They are compounded of desire and regret, of appetite and fear, of indulgence and remorse. While we are balancing, conditioning, temporizing, negotiating with conscience, we might be singing Te Deum for the victory.

What force we take from the will by every repetition, we give to the habit. A faint endeavour ends in a sure defeat. Temptation becoming more importunate, if its incursions are not resisted, if its attacks are not repelled, the habit will get final possession of the mind; encouragement will invite repetition; where it has been once entertained, it will find a ready way; where it has been received with familiarity, expulsion will soon become difficult, and afterwards impossible. The Holy Spirit, whose aid perhaps we have faintly invoked, and firmly rejected, is withdrawn. But if we are sincere in the invocation, we shall be firm in the resistance; if we are fervent in the resolution, we shall be triumphant in the conflict.

What we have insisted on is the more important, because all progressive goodness consists in habits; and virtuous habits, begun and carried on here with increasing improvement and multiplied energies, are susceptible of eternal proficiency. When we are assured that the effect of habits will not cease with life, but be carried into eternity, it gives such an enlarge-

ment to the ideas, such an expansion to the soul, that it seems as if every hour were lost in which we are not beginning or improving some virtuous habit.

As we were originally made in the image of God, so shall we, by the renovation of our minds, of which our improved habits is the best test, be restored, in an enlargement of our moral powers, to a nearer resemblance of Him. Were it not that there is a participation, in all rational minds, of the same qualities in kind, though infinitely different in degree, the perfections of God would not so repeatedly be held out in Scripture as objects of our imitation. It would have been absurd to have said, 'as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.' 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' would not have been a reasonable command, unless holiness and purity had been one common moral quality of the nature, though unspeakably distant in the proportion between that perfect Being from whom whatever is good is derived, and the imperfect creature who derives it. Surely it is not too much to say, that though we can only attain that low measure, of which our weak and sinful nature is capable, yet still to aim at imitating those perfections, is a desire natural to the renewed heart: and it may be considered as a symptom that no such renovation has taken place, when no such desire is felt.

How could we attempt to trace the perfections of the divine nature, if he had not stamped on our mind some idea of those perfections? We may bring these notions practically home to our own bosoms, possessing, as we do, not only natural ideas of the divine rectitude, but having these notions highly rectified, and confirmed by the Scripture representation of God; if, instead of adopting abstract reason for a rule of judging, which is often too unsubstantial for our grasp, we set ourselves to consider what such a perfect Being is likely to approve, or condemn, in human conduct, and then, comparing not only our deductions, but our practice, with the Gospel, adopt or reject what that approves or condemns.

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CHAP. XX.

On the inconsistency of Christians with Christianity.

We have, in three former chapters,* ventured to address a class of Christians whose lives are decorous, and whose manners are amiable; but who, from the want of having imbibed the vital spirit of Christianity, and having, therefore, formed their principles on imperfect models, seem to have fallen short of that excellence of which their characters are susceptible.

We presume now to address a very different class; persons acknowledging, indeed, the great truths of Christianity, but living either in the neglect of the principles they profess, or in practical opposition to the theory they maintain; yielding to the tyranny of passion or of pleasure, governed by the appetite or the caprice of the moment, and going on in a careless inattention to the duties inculcated by an authority they recognize. The lives of the persons previously considered are commonly better than their profession, the lives of those now under contemplation are worse. These seem to have more faults, the other more prejudices. The others are satisfied to be stationary; these are not aware that they are retrograde. The former are in a far better state; but there is hope that the latter may find out that they are in a bad one. The one rest in their performances, with little doubt of their safety; the other, with a blind security, rest in the promises, without putting themselves in the way to profit by them.

If the whole indivisible scheme of Christianity could be split into two portions, and either half were left to the option of these classes; those formerly noticed would adopt the commandments from an assurance of being saved by their obeying them; these under present consideration, would choose the creed, from a notion that its mere adoption would go near to exonerate them from personal obedience. The others intend to earn heaven by their defective works: these, overlooking the necessity of holiness, flatter themselves, when they think at all, with the cheap salvation of a mental assent. We all desire to be finally saved. There is but one opinion about the end; we only differ about the means. Many fly to the merits of the Redeemer to obtain happiness for themselves hereafter, who do not desire his Spirit to govern their lives now, though he has so repeatedly declared, that he will not save us without renovating us. To suppose that we shall possess hereafter what we do not desire here, that we shall complete then, what we do not think of beginning now, is among the inconsistencies of many who pass muster under the generick title of Christians.

The contest between heaven and earth seems to be reduced to one point, *which* shall possess the heart of man. The bent of our affections decides on the object of our pursuit. When they are rightly turned by his powerful hand, God has the predominance. It is the grand design of his word, of his Spirit, of all his dispensations, whether providential or spiritual, to restore us to himself, to recover the heart which sin has estranged from him. Where these instruments fail, the original bias governs, and the world has the entire possession.

Prospective prudence is esteemed a mark of wisdom by the world, and he who professed the wisdom which is from above, observes that 'the prudent man foreseeth.' Here the Bible and the world appear at first sight to be in strict accordance; but they differ materially, both as to the distance and the object of their forecast. How prudent do we reckon that man who denies himself present expenses, and waives present enjoyments, that he may more effectually secure to himself future fortune! We observe that his discreet self-denial will be amply rewarded by the increasing means of after indulgence. But if this very man were to extend his views still further, and look for the remuneration of his abstinence, not to a future day, but to a future life, he would not with his worldly friends, advance his character for wisdom. While he looks

* An inquiry why some good sort of people are not better.

to a distant point of time he is commended, but he forfeits the commendation, if he overlooks all time, and defers the fruition of his hope, till time shall be no more.

It is indeed this partial looking forward, this fixing the eye on some point of aggrandizement, or wealth, or some other distinction, which obstructs our view of the final prospect; or it is the excess of immediate gratification, the delights of sense, the blandishments of the world, which prevent us even from thinking of it. While the sensualist incloses himself in a narrow circle, beyond which his eye does not penetrate, the Christian, like the mariner, steers his course not by his sight but his compass. In any imminent distress, indeed, men almost naturally fly to their Maker. It is rather an impulse than a principle. Yet it is in prosperity, that we most need his assistance. Success, which is perhaps more eminently the hour of peril, is more rarely the hour of prayer. There is an intoxication attending on prosperous fortune, especially, while it is new, which diverts the spirits from communication with the Father of spirits. The slackening of devotion under success seems to imply a conviction that, prosperity being a gift of God, our prayers have been heard; we have obtained his blessing, and, having the end of our prayers granted, we insensibly lessen our endeavours to please Him whom our success induces us to believe that we have already pleased. Thus, having made things even, men seem to set out on a new career; they plan new indulgences, additional projects of splendour, or of gratification; they assiduously multiply those pleasant instances of obedience which the poet has flatteringly told us we give when we 'enjoy.' But the object of enjoyment is not seldom the instrument of destruction. Anacreon was choked by a grape-stone.

But, if prayer to the Fountain of all Good *is* occasionally offered up by the negligent Christian, it is not likely to be heard, because it is not his own prayer. We do not mean, because it is the composition of another; that, as it does not lessen its value, does not obstruct its acceptance. If the feelings go along with the petitions, they will be heard; if the affections are bound up with the words, they will be accepted. It is not because they are forms, but because the little interest taken in them, renders them mere forms. It is not because they are pre-composed, but because they are used with constraint—are repetitions, not effusions. It is using them without that condition of mind, without that cordial voluntary approach to the divine presence, to which is annexed the gracious promise of being in *no-wise* cast out; of that state of mind which David suggested when he said, 'My heart (not my lips) hath talked of Thee:' when, in answer to the command, 'Seek ye my face,' warm and instant from the heart he fervently replied, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

If it be objected, that we can no more pray up to scriptural expressions than we can live up to scriptural injunctions, does not the one, equally with the other, indicate the high aspiring nature of religion? Does it not remind us, that our aims must be always more lofty than the possibility of our attainments; that if the one be hitherto low and earthly, the other must be high and heavenly; bounded by no limits, restrained by no measures, but improving with our moral improvement, strengthening with our spiritual strength?

You do not deny that 'the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation,' because it is asserted by an authority you respect. But to whom is it such a power? You reply from your memory, 'To all them that believe.' But of what use is a belief that is obviously uninfluential? You are unconsciously falling into the very error of the fanatic whom you so justly condemn. Like him you value yourself upon your full assent to the truth of Christianity. You go beyond him, for you profess to have reason as well as faith on your side. But is not that an irrational faith which professes to believe, that a principle is productive of salvation, and yet to rest contented while you are not governed by that principle? You bring your reason and your will into the ordinary transactions of life; the one impels and the other guides, in almost all concerns except that one grand concern, where the impulse and the guidance are incomparably the most important. You allow, indeed, in a general way, that the thoughts and pursuits of religion are the most worthy of attention, and then act as if you held no such opinion, made no such avowal.

It is a wonderful instance of the union of justice and mercy in God, that in the very act of making sin the marked object of his displeasure, he makes the penitent offender the chosen object of his compassion. But revelation will afford no shelter to those who screen themselves under its promises, while they live in opposition to its laws; to those who desire to retain their vices, without relinquishing their hopes; who take refuge in the very mercy they are abusing; who think they exalt the efficacy of grace, by believing it will cancel, not only all the sins they have committed, but all they intend to commit. The truth is, if they really believe God, it is only when he promises. But shall he not also be believed when he threatens, or shall we desire him to abrogate half his word, that while we are violating one part, the other may confirm our security? Is not this subterfuge as much an abdication of common sense, as a contempt of divine justice?

Unhallowed passions too frequently enlist both wit and argument into their service, the one laughs at their excesses, the other reasons them away. Wit is no longer employed in her rightful office, to decorate virtue, but to ridicule her. Reason is no longer called in to control appetite, but to plead for it. Indulgence confirms its dominion. As the empire of sense is fortified, that of reason declines. Even God is audaciously, though, perhaps, gayly arraigned, for having made corrupt inclinations natural, and then punishing their indulgence; as if he had not given reason to restrain, as if he had not bestowed religion to control them.

It is not an uncommon practice to assent to the truth of Scripture, and even to approve and recommend it, without *really* believing it; for the test of belief is to make it the rule of judg

ing ourselves, and endeavouring to act as if we expected to be judged by it. The christian doctrines will always produce christian affections and dispositions in the mind, in the proportion in which they are understood, in the degree in which they are cordially embraced. The temper and conduct of the Christian is a faithful reflection of the doctrines of Christianity; and the improvement of his life is the only evidence of his having received its truths into his heart.

Of all the ingredients of which our intellectual and spiritual character is compounded, that is the most doubtful, the most unfixed, and the most easily shaken, which is in reality the basis of all our other principles, as well as the foundation of all our future hopes—we mean faith. It is the want of this living root which accounts for all the deformities in the mind, all the anomalies in the character of man. Disguise it as we will—and we confine not the charge to the profligate, or even to the negligent—it is unpractical belief which so sadly depresses our moral standard.

Yet the negligent in practice are not seldom confident in the profession of their faith. As they are not often troubled with any doubt of themselves, of course they institute no very deep inquiry whether they do sincerely believe the promises of Christianity. But, however frivolous *they* may deem the scrutiny, it was once thought to be a matter worthy of a serious inquiry among Christians, whether their hopes were well-founded. Better men than many who now reckon themselves good, entertained doubts of their own state, and could not rest till they came to something like decision on this momentous question. Is then that sober inquiry, which was in them the truest mark of prudence, now to be treated as a needless scrupulosity, if not as an evidence of an unsound mind? Are the doctrines of the Gospel on which they bestowed so much thought and labour unworthy of yours? Is that which was to them so serious a concern as to demand a combination of their best faculties and their most fervent endeavours, become so easy as to be comprehended at a glance, and adopted in a moment? Are the difficulties, which cost them so much reflection, prayer. and self-denial, miraculously removed, and made smooth for you? Are things so altered, that while they worked out their salvation with fear and trembling, you are secure of an easy, indolent, almost unsolicited salvation? Are corrupt human nature and the requisitions of the Gospel now so suddenly accommodated to each other? Are sin and safety grown so congruous? Is it become so natural to fallen creatures to be reconciled to God and goodness, without that long and serious process which was once thought so indispensable to its accomplishment? Is that superinduced principle which the most acute nation in the world accounted 'foolishness,' and the most perverse people a stumbling-block,' become to you so easy of apprehension, so accessible to your reach, so facilitated to your corruptions, so certain of attainment, as to supersede the labour of examination, as to be acquired without the trouble of pursuit? If to *you* the end is made sure, with the utter ignorance of the way, and a general neglect of the means; if *you* find that path clear which they found intricate; if *you* obtain, without seeking, that assurance, by the bare promise of which they were supported; if all this be really your happy case, it must have been achieved by some power which has not been before revealed, by some miracle which neither the Old or the New Testament has either recorded or predicted.

You would do well then, besides looking back to the oracles of truth, to inquire of your authorized instructors, if there has been any change effected in the requirements of Christianity, any deductions made in its demands, any facilities introduced into its scheme, any revelation by which the old impediments have been removed, and a shorter cut to heaven cleared out? Consult some real Christians of your acquaintance; inquire if *they*, despising and forsaking the good old way, found repentance, pardon, holiness, victory over the world, and acceptance with God, so slight, so rapid, yet so certain a thing? Ask if they became Christians by chance or by inheritance, if they were 'renewed in the spirit of their minds, by the mere form of baptism? Inquire if their entrance into a religious life cost them no sacrifice, if their attainments were accidental, if they maintained the ground once gained without effort, if they improved it without prayer, if they were established in it without divine assistance?

The truth is, the persons in question either do not think the defect of faith a fundamental error, or they suppose they believe when they do not. When this last is the case, they rest satisfied in their mistake; for people do not seek to extricate themselves from a doubt in which they do not feel entangled. It is, however, practical unbelief which quenches the vital flame of virtue.

Unbelief is not, as you are too ready to suppose, merely one among the many evils of the heart, but it is the root and principle of them all. That faith is the foundation of virtue is implied to have been clearly understood by the Apostle when he speaks of 'the *obedience* of faith.'

How hotly do we resent it, if *our* veracity is suspected! How indignantly do our hearts rise, if our fellow-creatures do not believe our word on occasions the most trivial! Yet we do not tremble at the idea of not believing the word of Omnipotence: yet do his promises excite no ardent desires in our hearts after the blessings they reveal.—And could this possibly be the case, if we confidently credited the truth of the promises?

If men only suspect there is some new road which may lead to fame or fortune, or any desirable acquisition, how sedulous are they in their inquiries after it, how anxious to ascertain its probability, how zealous to turn the information to their profit! But when *this* grand concern is in question, so far from investigating, they take it for granted, they assume, not only that the thing is true, but that their interest in it is safe. It scarcely costs them a thought, they are seldom embarrassed with a doubt. So far from reflecting how the difficulties which lie in the way may be removed, they do not inquire whether they exist, much less what they are,

and with those who would point them out, they evade the subject to save the trouble.—We need look no further for the solution of our indifference than that we do not earnestly desire the promised felicity, because of our practical incredulity.

If an intelligent Chinese had been made acquainted with the high privileges and sublime hopes of a Christian—what advantages he possesses here, and what prospects he has in reversion, not contingent, but certain, provided he turned his advantages to the securing of his prospects; what promises had been made him from an authority he allowed, and by a veracity he trusted;—what a glorious people would he expect to find in a society of such highly privileged beings!—Would he not look for cordial obedience to *his* laws in whose will they daily express a complete acquiescence?—for unbounded love and charity among creatures who periodically confessed that their own sins could not be forgiven, if they forgave not the sins of others?—for a gratitude among creatures who recognized one common redemption, which should bear some little proportion to his love by whom such an astonishing redemption had been wrought? Would he not conclude that nothing could be wanting to their happiness but an entrance on that immortality for which they must be so well prepared—nothing wanting to their perfection, but the visible presence of Him whom they acknowledge to be its source and centre?—and that in the mean time they were living the life of saints preparatory to their commencing that of angels?

But when, on a personal intercourse, he observed that the lives of so many beings, the essence of whose religion is love, was a scene of strife and emulation—that this community of Christians which he thought like the city of Jerusalem, was at unity with itself, had rather be at unity with any thing than with each other—split into parties and torn asunder by conflicting interests!—when he saw that the professors of a religion, founded in humility and self-denial, could be proud without reproach, and voluptuous without discredit; when he saw, in so many other respects, the inconceivable distance between our lives and our patterns, our hopes and our aims, would he not believe the whole had been a misrepresentation?—Would he not rejoice, like a true patriot, to find that there was less difference between the inhabitants of Pekin and London than between the professor of Christianity and the Gospel from which he took his rule?—Would not this be his natural inference, either that Christianity is not true, or that its avowed disciples do not believe it? When he compared their actual indulgences with their exalted expectances, would he not believe that their religion was founded on a proclamation for present enjoyment, and not on a promise of future blessedness? In any event, would he conceive that eternal glory was to be obtained without an effort, I had almost said without a wish?

CHAP. XXI.

Expostulation with the inconsistent Christian.

The most valuable truths, though known, are useless, if not applied. Though men were acquainted with the magnetic power of the loadstone before the Christian era, it remained an object of idle admiration, till within a very few centuries. The practical use of the needle being at length found out, its application to its true end gave mankind access to unknown regions, and opened to them a new world. If such were the application of religious knowledge to its proper end, it would, indeed, open to us a world, in which, not only one but every adventurer, might be rewarded, not with discovery merely, but with possession.

To this unseen world God has shown us the way by his word, has smoothed that way by his grace, has promised us the direction of his Spirit; has given us free access by his Son, revealing him to us at once, as our propitiation and our pattern. Shall we not, then, thankfully embrace this propitiation, and keep this pattern before our eyes? And though our nearest approaches will be infinitely distant, let us come as near to it as we can, and let us frequently try, by the only true touchstone, whether we have more receded or approached. If we find our deflection has been greater since the last examination, let the discovery put us upon praying more fervently, watching more vigilantly, and labouring more earnestly. If we have gained any ground, let us try to secure our advantages by pushing our progress. What a low standard, and yet it was a high one in his estimation, did he propose, who said to his friend, 'If thou art not Socrates, yet live as one who would be glad to be Socrates!' To what an elevated pitch were *his* views raised, who, disdaining an inferior model, said, 'Be ye like minded with Christ!'

Every degree of goodness is only a ray from the central perfections of God. There is no shadow of right in any of his creatures but is indicative of his immeasurable goodness. The human virtues had originally a stronger resemblance to, and more intimate correspondence with, the Being from which they emanated, but by man's apostacy, the analogy was not only impaired, but nearly lost. Yet a sufficient knowledge of what is good, an ample power of judging, remains to us, to convince us, that religion is a very reasonable principle, that it is addressed to our understandings as well as to our affections. God, by the revelation of himself and his purposes, does not destroy, but strengthen, our natural notions of rectitude, our rational ideas of justice, our native feelings of truth and equity. The Scripture account of the moral perfections of God, and of the manner in which he will judge the world, is consonant to those notions which he has implanted in us. Christianity exalts, clears and purifies the light of reason, ennoble and elevates the dictates of natural conscience, but does not contradict them—does not subvert our ideas of justice, nor overturn our innate sense of right and wrong. Our nature, though full of perverseness in the will, is not so preposterous in her judgment as to believe that a revelation from God would ever teach a law in direct opposition to natural justice; that the illumination of the Gospel was meant to extinguish 'the candle of the Lord' set up in every human bosom. God would be inconsistent with him-

self, if he gave us the light of reason dim indeed, but still a light, and then gave us a revelation, not to clear that dimness not to enlighten that comparative darkness, but to oppose, eclipse, extinguish it.

To this capacity of judging, to this power of determining, and to your profession of faith, we venture to appeal. We are not arguing with you as with persons who deny the truth of Christianity, but addressing you as avowed believers, who neglect the application of that truth which the infidel denies. We do not propose any disallowed scheme, we do not offer any rejected doctrine, any disputed opinions; we do not invite your submission to any authority which you do not acknowledge. We suggest nothing but what your understandings assent to, nothing but what you profess to believe. Yet these truths you vitally disavow, this authority you actually renounce, this creed you practically subvert, if they do not furnish the ground of your conduct. You acknowledge all the verities of the Bible, but your lives are unaltered. Your hearts are impressible by all the tender human affections; awake to all 'the charities of father, son, and brother;'—Why are they untouched, just where they ought to be most sensible, languid where they should be vigorous, dead where they should show most vital energy?

There is in this conduct a double incongruity. The persons in question not only forbear to exhibit in their own lives those admirable effects which Christianity is so calculated to produce, but they do not like to see them produced to any great extent in others. They are not backward in branding those who exhibit, in their fair proportions, the practical effects of the doctrines they themselves profess to admire, with the suspicion of hypocrisy, or the reproach of extravagance. In the common course of affairs, nothing is more censured than *inconsistency*. In religion it is quite otherwise. It is thought criminal to make no religious profession; yet, to act consistently with that profession, to make the practice square with the principle, in short, to live as we believe, exposes a person to be suspected of a deficiency of sense, or of sincerity; subject him to a doubt, either of the integrity of his heart, or the sanity of his mind.

Christianity lays down plain rules for the conduct of those who profess it. The Bible is in the hands of this class of professors; but when a portion of it has been carelessly perused, it is considered as having done its office. It is laid down, and the reader, instead of applying to his conduct the law he has been studying, immediately applies to the law of custom, of fashionable acquaintance, of caprice, of appetite, for that rule which, in conversation he would acknowledge, was only to be found in the book he had been reading. In matters of faith, an indefinite assent is yielded; he only desires to be excused from the consequences they involve. He would indeed, like to cavil at some points, but an unexamined approbation costs less trouble; so he believes in the gross, occasionally, however, indulging a little levity to show his wit, and a few doubts to show his discrimination.

We do not act thus on other occasions. The arts we learn we turn to the purpose for which we learned them. The science we acquire we apply. The study of geometry is made applicable to practical purposes. The knowledge of mechanics is not studied for its own sake, but for the benefit of those, to whom the application brings so many conveniences. The fairest hand-writing would be of little value, if the use did not follow the acquisition. Yet if religion is not only of more allowed importance, but of more universal application, than all human knowledge put together, why is it not, like that, brought to bear on the purposes for which it was sent, the rectification of the heart and life? If we acknowledge the Bible to be the only unerring road-book to that land to which we are travelling, why, after consulting it in the closet, do we forget it on the journey, not only neglecting the direction it affords but pursuing contrary paths of our own devising.

It is a spectacle to excite the tenderest commisseration when we observe the excellent gifts of God to some of his most favoured creatures—when we see the brightest natural faculties improved by high cultivation, together with that degree of acquaintance with religion, which not only expels infidelity, but leads to a certain vague adoption of the christian creed—when we see men, not only rich in mental endowments, but possessed of hearts glowing with generosity and kindness—when we see such beings as much absorbed in the pursuits of time and sense, as dead to the highest ends of their being, limiting their plans to the present life as completely as if they did not believe in that immortality which yet makes part of their system:—to see them overlooking the excellences which may be attained in this state preparatory to their perfection in a better;—unobservant of that deep basis which God has laid in our very nature for the condition of future blessedness—forgetting how he has not only graciously put us in the way to attain it, but has exhorted, but has invited us, only to *consent*, only to *submit* to be eternally happy! When we hear the Saviour of sinners condescending to express this tender regret at their reluctance, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.'—Who can, without sorrow, contemplate such a discrepancy between the practice and the destination, the pursuits and the interests, the low desires and the high possibilities, the unspeakable offers and the incorrigible blindness?

But in our lapsed humanity, sense, in opposition to faith, is too frequently the dictator. If we see through a glass, and that darkly, it is because the medium is clouded by the breath of sensuality. Appetite is the arbitrary power which renders every appeal to reason and religion fruitless. The pleasures of the present life have matter and substance, and we act as if those of heaven were dreams and visions. Self-love errs only in mistaking its objects, in putting the brief discipline which we are called to exercise here on a level with eternal suffering; it mistakes in fastening itself on the lower part of our nature, and forgetting that our souls are ourselves.

But surely God did not give his creatures such improvable powers, such strong notices of

himself, without some farther end and design than can be perfected in this brief state of being! He never would have given us a nature capable of knowing and loving him here, if it were not part of his scheme that our knowledge and love of him should be perfected in eternity. We are not the creatures of casualty. We did not come into this world by chance, or by mistake, for any uncertain end, or any undetermined purpose, but for a purpose of which we should never lose sight, for an end to which we should have a constant reference; that we might bring glory to God now, and be received by his grace to glory everlasting.

For though all the contributions of all the creatures in existence can add nothing to his inherent glory, yet he has condescended to declare that he will be glorified by us.—Instead of which, what misshapen ideas do not many form of God! How do they deface the plan of Providence! Were that commodious creed true, that mercy is his exclusive attribute, how safely might we sin on; the profligate would be as secure of pardon and acceptance as the penitent, the profane as the pious, the voluptuous as the self-denying, the sceptic as the believer, the lovers of pleasure as the lovers of God.

Instead of endeavouring 'to be conformed to the image of God,' according to his express command, do not too many thus form a god after their own image, by thinking him such a one as themselves? Do they not almost slide into the practice of the Epicureans, who having made a scheme of ease, indolence, and indulgence, for their conduct, prudently invented gods accommodated to their own taste and habits? In them there was consistency. It was making their faith of a piece with their practice, when they made their deities as careless, as sensual, and as pleasure-loving as themselves. But surely under a pure dispensation, to form a false and unworthy estimate of the character of the Supreme Governor of the universe, is scarcely less criminal than to deny his existence. Where is the difference between divesting him of his being, and of his perfections?

Our Saviour and his Apostle, in their classification of sins, frequently bring together such as appear to us to have a wide disparity. 'Emulation' is classed with 'strife,' 'variances' with 'idolatry,' 'revolling' with 'murder.' Those 'who mind earthly things' are coupled with those 'whose end is destruction.' In enumerating the offences which shall make his second coming so tremendously awful, Christ ranks the being 'overcharged with the cares of this life'—cares which we are apt to call prudence and industry—with sins, of which Christian industry and prudence would think with abhorrence.

If the apology we make is, that we are governed by example, if we plead the necessity of acting as others, especially as our acquaintance act, we intrench ourselves in excuses which have no analogy with our conduct on other occasions. We are never so disinterested as to think of being sick, or poor, or miserable for company. We never generously plead the necessity of involving ourselves in debt, because our friends are so involved—of being ruined, because those whom we love are ruined. Shall sympathy, civility, imitation, and a social spirit, then, be pleaded only on occasion of mischiefs that are irrevocable, reserved for errors that are irretrievable, for practices, the consequences of which will be irremediable?

It is a low degree in the scale of goodness with which they are contented, who congratulate themselves that they are not worse than others, and a death-blow to the noble ambition of piety when they are contented not to be better. If, indeed, they think they are perfectly happy now, they need look no farther. But before they answer this important question, are you happy? let them interrogate their own heart. If they ask it fairly, it will answer honestly, *I am not happy*. Happiness is incompatible with the state of their minds, with the nature of their pursuits. The very fondness for variety proceeds from an internal sense of indigence. They are satiated without being satisfied.—The ever-renewed and ever-frustrated attempts of the fabled daughters of Danaus, whose labour, a pagan poet tells us, *was infinite, and their punishment eternal*, is the disappointing life and lot of these mistaken votaries of worldly enjoyment. The prophet annexes to somewhat of the same discouraging pursuit, an awful explanatory reason, when he represents the error of those who 'how out broken cisterns which hold no water,' to have originated in their 'forsaking the fountain of living waters.'

But even the most careless livers have not lost the natural sense of the moral quality of actions. They can reason upon them; they understand the rules they violate; they retain the perception of excellence; they preserve the feeling of kindness; they had rather be the objects of regard than dislike, if it could be acquired at a cheaper rate, than that of forming their conduct by the principles they approve. *They wish they were better*, while they make no effort towards being other than they are. Their very wish for amendment is so cold, so careless, and so slight, that it wants all the characters of repentance, all the energies of resolution, all the sincerity of reformation. While we sometimes hear from these persons, in addition to this wish, a general declaration, that *they hope they shall mend*, we seldom see any step taken in consequence of this profession; on the contrary, they are quieted for the time; they take a sort of heartless comfort in this better taste; they flatter themselves it is a proof they love virtue, though they neglect it. But they do not act thus in what truly interests them. If there is a scheme of amusement in view, the time is accurately settled, the party nicely adjusted, their punctuality is exact, there is neither delay nor excuse. It is only on matters of everlasting interest that they beg leave to postpone, what they would not be thought to reject. Among all the countless generations of frail and fallen humanity, incomparably the most numerous community, is the sect of *Postponers*. If, as some old divine quaintly observes, 'hell is paved with good intentions,' may we not say, that the postponers, of which multitudes are found in all ages, and in all churches, are the class that has contributed the greatest number

of squares to the tesselated pavement. It is not an inconsistency common to every member of this sect, to wish that the portion of his life which is gone by had been spent in virtue, while this wish is too feeble to stimulate his future days to those pursuits in which he laments the past were not spent?

You do not act thus inconsistently by any necessity of nature; depraved as the will is, in common with our other faculties, it does not necessarily rob you of the power of determining; it does not take from you the ability of imploring the strength you want. To choose the good, and to refuse the evil, is yet left to your option. Why do the Scriptures make such repeated and solemn appeals to the will, if its agency were so utterly involuntary? On this will there is no irresistible compulsion. On the supposition that this were not the case, all human laws would be unreasonable, all courts of judicature not only unjust but preposterous; all legal executions absurd as well as inhuman; for would it not be barbarous to punish crimes which the perpetrator was not left at liberty to avoid? In this case Ravaillac would have been guiltless, and Bellingham excusable.

Nor is it your reason which dissuades you from religion. If you would consult its sound and sober dictates, it would point to religion as naturally as the eye points to the object it would investigate, as the needle to its attracting point. It is not your reason but your corruptions which turn away your heart from religion, because it tells you that something is to be done in opposition to their sway, something to be opposed contrary to their nature, something to be renounced congenial with their gratification.

It is a fatal mistake to expect to get rid of an evil by trying to become insensible to it. To divert the attention in order to stupify the conscience, is almost imitating the malefactor about to be executed, who swallows cordials, which, if they allay his terrors, do so only by deadening his sensibility. Take, then, a distinct view of your state, and of your prospects. Deliberation is valuable, were it only on this ground, that while you are deliberating, there is an intermission of passion, there is an interval of appetite: as these intermit, better feelings have time to rally, better thoughts to come forward, better principles to struggle for operation.

If with hearts naturally inclined to evil (as what heart is not?) and in a world abounding with temptation, you have strayed widely from the strait path, you are not compelled to pursue it. We need continue in sin no longer than we love it. Close not then your heart against that grace which is offered to all; it will perfect the work it has once begun, if we do not wilfully oppose its operations. Let us not therefore lay *all* the blame on our natural conceptions as if we were compelled to sink under them. They will, indeed, continue to impede our progress, but unless aided by our inclinations, they will not finally obstruct it. But wilfully to sin on, and yet expect pardon through the merits of our Redeemer, looks like an impious plot to blind the eyes of Omniscience, and to tie the hands of Omnipotence. We shall always have this infallible criterion by which to judge of our state; we may be assured that our sins are not forgiven, if they are not mortified. We need not pry into our destination in the inscrutable decrees of the Almighty, but in our own rectified affections, our own subdued will. Let us never remit our diligence by any persuasion of our security, nor slacken our obedience by any fond conceit that our names are written in heaven.

But alas! the soul is full of the body, the intellect is steeped in sense. The spiritual life is immersed in the animal. Reason and appetite instead of keeping their distinct natures, are in many instances so mixed and incorporated, that it is not always easy to decompose and reduce them to their separate principles. It is in want of cordial sincerity which prevents truth from being sought, and where she is not sought, she will not be found. Internal purity of heart, and sanctity of spirit, afford a fairer exhibition of religion, than the most subtle dogmas, and the most zealous debates.

If we seek peace in God, we shall never fail of finding it; if we look for it in the world, it is to look for a clear stream from a polluted source. We have a spirit within us that will occasionally, though unbidden, remind us of our high original, 'from what height fallen.' How widely have we wandered in search of the good we have lost! We have sought for it in the tumults of ambition, in the pleasures of voluptuousness, in the misleadings of flattery, in our own high imaginations, in the self-gratulations of pride, in the secret indulgence of that vanity, which, probably, it has been one part of our pride not to cure but to conceal. Let us begin to seek for it where alone it is to be found, where alone God has promised it—in the 'way' which he has opened, in the 'truth' which he has revealed, and in the 'life' which he has quickened.

Do not, then, any longer make religion an incidental item in your scheme of life. Do not turn over the consideration of it to chance; make it a part of your daily plan; take it up as a set business; give it an allotted portion in the distribution of your daily concerns, while you admit it as the pervading principle of them all. You carry on no other transaction casually; you do not conduct your profession or manage your estate by fits and starts. You do not expect your secular business will go on well without minding it. You set about it intently; you transact it with a fixed design; you consider it as a definite object. You would not be satisfied with it, if it brought you no return, still less would you be satisfied not to know whether it brought any return or not. Yet you are contented as to this great business of life, though you perceive no evidence of its progress. You see no absurdity in a religious profession which leaves you as indigent as it found you. Does it not look as if your sincerity, in one case, did not keep pace with your earnestness in the other; as if your religion was a shadow, and your secular concerns were the only reality?

Begin then to be distinct in your purposes, explicit in your designs, sincere in your pursuits. You profess to read the Scriptures occasionally; if the perusal has hitherto produced no sensible effect, this is only an additional motive for making the incidental practice habitual. Do not inter

mit it under pretence that it has produced no benefit. It is a great thing to keep within the use of God's appointed means. If you had not some pleasure in even a casual perusal, you would avoid it altogether. The blessing which has been so long delayed perhaps has not been cordially requested; when earnestly desired it will not be finally withheld. Light precedes warmth in the daily course of nature. Begin then to consider that knowledge not turned to profit will be a grand article at the final reckoning. How many thousands have not even made the progress which you have made; have not attained that literal acquaintance with the Bible which you have attained. *They* are utterly, perhaps irreclaimably, ignorant. *You* have laid in, at least in your understanding, a certain though perhaps slender stock of materials, on which the divine light only waits to shine till you petition for it; that light which, if you will open your eyes to receive it, will shine more and more unto the perfect day. God has assured you in his word that he '*waits* to be gracious.' The compassionate father in the parable moved more eagerly to embrace his son, than the returning prodigal to meet the parent. He scarcely waited for his protestations; the pardon prevented the confession; he condescended to rejoice even in his *acceptance* of forgiveness.

It is not a new scheme which is promised to you; it is not an imaginary project, an untried device. There is nothing unreasonable in the hope held out; no elevation in piety but what with the offered aid is attainable; nothing but what multitudes have attained; not merely prophets and saints and holy men, but persons whose cases were as unpromising as yours; men labouring under the same corruptions; disturbed by the same passions, assailed by the same trials, drawn aside by the same temptations, exposed to the same dangerous world; long led astray by its customs, long enslaved by its maxims. The same grace which rescued them is offered to you. The same Spirit which struggled with their hearts is, perhaps, while you are reading these feeble lines, striving with yours. Resist not the impulse. Complete the assimilation. Let not the resemblance be more imperfect in its fairer features than in its more deformed. Imitate their noble resolution. Recollect the glorious promise made, 'to him that overcometh.' The same power which delivered them waits to deliver you. The ten thousand times ten thousand who now stand before the throne, were not innocent, but penitent—not guiltless men, but redeemed sinners. The same God waits to be gracious. The same Saviour intercedes. The same Spirit invites. The same heaven is open. Plead that gracious nature, implore that divine intercessor, invoke that blessed Spirit. Say not it is too late. Early and late are relative, not positive terms. While the door is yet open there is no hour of marked exclusion. So may an inheritance among the saints in light still be yours.

CHAP. XXII.

Reflections of an inconsistent Christian after a serious perusal of the Bible.

I PROFESS to believe that Christianity is true Its promises are high; but what have been its profits? It is time to inquire into its truth and its advantages. It never, indeed, pledged itself to confer honours or emoluments; but it engaged to bestow benefits of another kind. If the Christian is deceived in these, he has nothing to console him. Now what am I the better for Christianity? It speaks of changing the heart from darkness to light. What illumination has my mind experieneed from it?—But here a doubt begins to arise. Am I indeed a Christian? What claims have I to the character?

Is there any material difference, whether I depend on heaven as a thing of course, to those who have been baptized, though they possess no corresponding temper and conduct; or whether I never reflect that there is a heaven, or whether I absolutely disbelieve that there is any such place? Is the distinction so decisive between speculative unbelief, practical infidelity, and total negligence, as that either of them can afford an assurance of eternal happiness in preference to the other? Yet while the thought of heaven never enters my mind, should I not hotly resent it as an injury, if any one disputed my title to it? Should I not treat him who advised me to a more serious life, as an enemy, and him who suspected I required it, as a calumniator? Is it not, however, worth the inquiry, whether my confidence of obtaining it is well founded: and whether any danger arises from my ignorance or unfitness?

If the scriptures be authentic—if, as I have always professed to believe, they indicate a state of eternal happiness, together with the means of attaining to it—then surely not to direct my thoughts to that state, not to apply my attention to those means, is to neglect the state and the things, for which I was sent into the world. Providence, doubtless, intended that every species of being should reach the perfection for which it was created. Shall his only rational creature be the only one that falls short of the end for which he was made? the only one who refuses to reach the top of his nature, who refuses to comply with his original destination?

If I were quite certain that I was not created for such a great and noble end as Christianity has revealed, I should then be justified in acting as a being would naturally act, who has no higher guide than sense, no nobler incentive than appetite, no larger scope than time, no ampler range than this world. And though I might then regret that my powers and faculties, my capacities and desires, were formed for so low a purpose, and their exercise limited to so brief a space, yet it would not, in that case, be acting inconsistently, to turn my fugitive possessions, and my contracted span, to the best account of present enjoyment.

But if I have indeed, as I profess to have, any faith however low, any hope however feeble, any prospect however faint, is it rational to act in such open opposition to my profession? Is it right or reasonable, to believe and to neglect, to avow and to disregard, to profess and to oppose, the same thing? Do I raise my character for that understanding on which I value myself, if, while a confession of a faith which has been

adopted by the wisest men in different ages, my temper is not, like theirs, subdued to it, my life is not, like theirs, governed by it.

I think this world more certain than the next, because I have the evidence of my senses to its reality; and because its enjoyments are present, visible, tangible. But the same being who gave my senses, gives also reason and faith; and do not these afford to the sincere inquirer other evidence of no less power? Even in many natural things, we receive the evidence of reason as confidently as the testimony of sense. Our reason informs us, that the things we see could not have been produced without a cause which we do not see: we might as well say they have no being, as that they had no cause—and yet the cause lies as completely out of our reach as the things of another world. Tho unseen things, then, may be as satisfactorily proved by other arguments, as the things we know are proved by our senses. But the highest evidence of things not seen is faith. Even this principle we admit in worldly things, but reject in spiritual. We should know very little of this earth, if we knew only what we have seen. Now we believe that a multitude of things exists which we never saw, and which few comparatively have seen. This is the evidence of faith in the testimony of the relater.

I see persons in the ordinary affairs of life act upon the mere report of authentic information; conduct concerns analogous to those whose success is made known to them by impartial evidence, and act confidently on the relation of credible witnesses; and they would be thought perverse and unreasonable, were not their conduct influenced by such competent testimony. Is it, then, only in the momentous concern of religion, where these appropriate evidences are allowed to be incontestible, where the revelation from heaven, where the attestation of undeniable witnesses, has established the truth in the minds of inquiring men beyond a doubt?—Is it only where the testimony is more unquestionable, and the object the most transcendantly important, that neglect is pardonable, that delay is prudent, that indifference is safe?

It is time to arrive at some decision on a question which, if it be any thing, is every thing; which, if it be indeed founded in infallible truth, involves consequences so vast, effects so lasting, that all the other concerns of the whole world shrink into nothing, when weighed against my individual concern in this single business.

That thinking mind which enables me to frame these reflections, that sentient spirit which suggests these apprehensions, those irrepressible feelings which drive out my thoughts, and force my speculations beyond the present scene, prove that I have something within me which was made for immortality. If, then, I am convinced of these truths, can I any longer hesitate to devote my best thoughts to my highest good, my chiefest care to my nearest concern, my most intense solicitude to my everlasting interests?

Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief! Convert my dead faith into an operative principle! Let my sluggish will be quickened, let my reluctant desires give some signs of life. Let it be an evidence of the real existence of my faith, that it is not inert.

We talk of the glory of heaven as coolly, and hear of it with as much indifference, as if it were the unalienable birth-right of every nominal Christian, and that our security left no room for our solicitude. But I now find, on examining it more closely, that the Bible speaks of a thing which Christians of my class neglect to take into the account; a *fitness* for that glory, a spirit prepared for that state, which God has prepared for them that love him. It not only promises them heaven, but quickens their desires after it, qualifies them for the enjoyment of it. Now, can I conscientiously declare that I possess, that I have endeavoured to possess, those desires, without which heaven is unattainable; those dispositions, without which, if it could be attained, it would not be a place of happiness? Is it, then, probable, arguing upon merely rational grounds, that God will receive me to his presence there, if I continue to live without him in the world? Will he accept me when I come to die, alienated from him in heart and thought as I have lived?

After all, uncertainty is no comfortable state. It is safer to seek a satisfactory solution to my doubts by serious inquiry; to seek tranquillity to my heart by earnest prayer. It is better to implore the promised aid, to strengthen my vacillating mind, even though I renounce a little present ease, a little temporary pleasure. If, indeed, avoiding to think of the evil would remove it, if averting my eyes from the danger would annihilate it, all would be well. But if, on the contrary, fearing it now, may avert it for ever, common sense, reasonable self-love, mere human prudence, compel me to make the computation of the relative value of time and eternity. I may, indeed, as I have frequently done, postpone my purpose to some future time. But then I am not so skilled in the doctrine of chances as to be quite certain that time may ever arrive. He that intends to reform to-morrow does not repent to-day. When delay is danger, is it not foolish to delay? Where it may be destruction, is it not something worse than folly? I will arise, and go to my Father, &c. &c. &c.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Christian in the World

'The only doctrinal truth,' says bishop Sanderson, 'which Solomon insisted on, when he took the whole world for his large but barren text, was, that all is vanity.'—This was not the verdict of a hermit railing from his cell at pleasures untasted, or at grandeur unenjoyed. Among the sons of men, not one had sought with more unremitted diligence, or had wider avenues to the search, for whatever good either skill or power could extract out of the world, than Solomon. No one could judge of the sweets which can be drawn from this grand Alembic with higher natural abilities, or with deeper experimental wisdom. He did not descant on the

vanity of the world so eloquently till he had considered it accurately, and examined it practically. He was not contented, like a learned theorist to collect his notions from philosophy, or history, or hearsay; he well knew what he said, 'and whereof he affirmed.' All upon which he so pathetically preached he had seen with his eyes, heard with his ears, and, in his widely roving search, had experienced in his own disappointed mind, and felt in his own aching heart. He goes on to prove, by an induction of particulars, the grand truth propounded in his thesis, the *vanity of the world.* He shows in a regular series of experiments, how he had ransacked its treasures, exhausted its enjoyments, and even to satiety revelled in its honours, riches, and delights. He had been an intellectual as well as sensual voluptuary, and had emptied the resources of knowledge as well as of pleasure. Then reverting in the close of his discourse to the point from which he had set out, he again pronounces, that all is vanity.

'The conclusion of the whole matter' which he draws from this melancholy argument, as finely exhibited as pensively conceived, is a solemn injunction to others to remember, what it is to be feared the preacher himself had sometimes forgotten, that the whole duty of man is to fear God, and keep his commandments: winding up his fine peroration with a motive in which every child of Adam is equally, is awfully concerned, '*because* God shall bring every work into judgment.'

May not every real Christian, while his heart is touched with the affecting truth of the text, be admonished by this solemn valedictory declaration? May he not learn the lesson inculcated at less expense than it was acquired by this great practical master of the science of wisdom? If another sovereign was told there was no royal way to geometry, the King of Israel has opened a royal way to a more divine philosophy. By the benefit to be derived from contemplating this illustrious instance of 'how little are the great,' the Christian may set out where Solomon ended. He may be convinced of the vanity of the world at a price far cheaper than Solomon paid for it, by a way far safer than his own experience. He may convert the experiment made by the royal Preacher to his own personal account. He may find in the doctrines of the Gospel a confirmation of its truth, in its precepts a counteraction to its perils, in its promises a consolation for its disappointments.

In this world, such as Solomon has vividly painted it, the Christian is to live—is to live, through divine assistance, untainted by its maxims, uncontaminated by its practices. Man being obviously designed by his Creator for social life, and society being evidently his proper place and condition, it seems to be his duty not so much to consider what degree of possible perfection he might have attained in that state of seclusion to which he was never destined, as how he may usefully fill his allotted sphere in the world for which he was made; how he may conscientiously discharge the duties to which he is plainly called by providential ordination. To think how he may acquit himself well in his actual state and condition, is clearly more profitable than to waste his time and spirits, in devising the best speculative scheme of life, to the adoption of which there is little probability of his ever being appointed.

We were not sent into this world with orders to make ourselves miserable, but with abilities, and directions, and helps, to search out the best possibilities of happiness which remain to beings, fallen from that state of moral and mental rectitude in which man was created; to make the best of the ruins of that perfect world whose beauty he had marred, and whose capacity of confering felicity he had fatally impaired. Human life, therefore, abounding as it does in blessings and mercies, is not the blissful vision which youthful fancy images, or poetry feigns, or romance exhibits. It is in a considerable measure compounded of painful and dull realities, and not a splendid tissue of grand events or brilliant exploits; it is to some an almost unvaried state of penury, to many a series of cares and troubles, to all, a state of probation. But the primeval punishment, the sentence of labour, like the other inflictions of Him who in judgment remembers mercy, is transformed into a blessing. And whether we consider the manual industry of the poor, or the intellectual exertions of the superior classes, we shall find that diligent occupation, if not criminally perverted from its end, is at once the instrument of virtue and the secret of happiness. Man cannot be safely trusted with a life of leisure.

As the character about to be briefly considered is presumed to be a real Christian, it would be superfluous, for two reasons, to insist that his vocation in the world must be lawful. It is not to be supposed that a religious man will ever engage in an employment that is illicit; and it is almost equally beyond supposition, that persons who are actually so engaged, will cast their eyes on a book whose tendency is serious.

But the most unexceptionable profession is not exempt from dangers. It requires strict watchfulness, not only to conduct the most useful undertaking in a right spirit, and with a constant eye to Him, to whom every intelligent being is accountable; it requires not only constant vigilance against the allurements of avarice and the baits of ambition, but it requires caution against the unsuspected mischiefs of embarking so widely, or plunging so deeply in any temporal concern, as almost necessarily to deteriorate the character. He embarks too widely, and plunges too deeply, however honourable be the undertaking, if it absorb the whole man—if it so crowd his mind with interfering schemes, and complicated projects, as to leave no time and no thought, and gradually no inclination for that reference which should be the ultimate end of all human designs.

It can never be too often repeated, however writers tire with saying, and readers with hearing it, that it is scarcely more necessary to address serious suggestions to men sunk in gross pursuits, than to that large, important, and valuable class, whose danger lies in the very credit, and dignity, and usefulness of their engagements. A thousand dissertations have been written, and yet the theme is not exhausted, on

hat hackneyed but neglected truth, that *we are undone by lawful things*, by excess in things right in themselves, and which only become wrong by being inordinately pursued—pursued to the neglect of things more essential; when what is even laudable is exclusively sought, to the forgetfulness of what is indispensable. Things may not only be comparatively, but positively, good, and yet not be 'things which accompany salvation.' They may not only be intended to be instrumental, but actually be so, both in advancing the prosperity, and in restraining the disorders of this world, and so far be highly valuable, and yet the act may be substituted for that principle which should be its inspiring motive. The fault, however, is not in the thing, but in the mind, when useful actions are not done with a reference to the highest end. Of this reference a Christian will aim never to lose sight. He will, before he engage in the concerns of the day, prepare his mind by fervent devotion; not only imploring direction in the common course of action, and the expected occurrences of the day, but strength to meet those unknown occasions and unsuspected events, which, in human life, and especially in a life of business, so frequently occur. Without this panoply, he will not venture to engage with the world; but the armour which he put on in solitude, he will not lay aside in the field of battle; it was for that warfare he had buckled it on.

As the lawyer has his compendium of cases and precedents, the legislator his statutes, the soldier his book of tactics, and every other professor his *vade mecum* to consult in difficulties, the Christian to whichever of the professions he may belong, will take his morning lecture from a more infallible directory, comprehending not only cases and precedents, but abounding also with those seminal principles which contain the essence of all actual duty from which all practical excellence is deducible. The spirit of laws differ from all legal institutes, some of which, from that imperfection inseparable from the best human things, have been found unintelligible, some impracticable, and some have become obsolete. The divine law is subject to no such disadvantages. It is perfect in its nature, intelligible in its construction, and eternal in its obligation.

This sacred institute he will consult, not occasionally, but daily. Unreminded of general duty, unfurnished with some leading hint for the particular demand, he will not venture to rush into the bustle, trial, and temptation of the day. Of this aid he will possess himself with more ease, and less loss of time, as he will not have to ransack a multiplicity of folios for a detached case, or an individual intricacy; for, though he may not find in the Bible specific instances, yet he will discover in every page some governing truth, some rule of universal application, the spirit of which may be brought to bear on almost every circumstance; some principle suited to every purpose, and competent to the solution of every moral difficulty. Scripture does not, indeed, pretend to include technical or professional peculiarities, but it exhibits the temper and the conduct which may be made applicable to the special concerns of every man whatever be his occupation. He will find in it the right direction to the right pursuit, the straight road to the proper end; the duty of a pure intention; and the prohibition of false measures to attain even a laudable object. No hurry or engagement will ever make him lose sight of that sacred aphorism so pointedly addressed to men of business, 'He that maketh haste to be rich shall hardly be innocent.' The cautionary texts he admired in his closet, he will not treasure up as classical mottos to amuse his fancy, or embellish his discourse, but will adopt as rules of conduct, and bring them into every worldly transaction, whether commercial, forensic, medical, military, or whatever else be his professed object. He will not adjust his scale of duty by the false standard of the world, nor by any measure of his own devising; he has but one standard of judging, but one measure of conduct—the infallible word of God. This rule he will take as he finds it, he will use as he is commanded; he will not bend it to his own convenience, he will not accommodate it to his own views, his own passions, his own emolument, his own reputation.

Here it may be asked, Why is not Scripture more explicit in description, more minute in detail? We find our self-love perpetually furnishing subterfuges for evading duties, and multiplying exceptions to rules. God, who knows all hearts, and foresaw their captiousness, might, it may be said, have guarded against it by more enlarged instructions. The holy Spirit, however, did not see fit to descend to such minutiæ, but, having given the principle, left man to the exercise of his reason, in the application of the general law to his particular case; for if he is left to the use of his judgment, it is not that he may pervert truth, but apply it. His understanding and rectitude are perpetually called into joint exercise, for that which is immediately the duty of one man, another may not be called to perform.

Not to distress the mind, therefore, with unnecessary scruples, nor to perplex it by a multiplicity of circumstances, some things are left indefinite. An incumbered body of institutes would have been too vast and complicated for general use; that time would be taken up in selecting them, which is better employed in acting upon them. Even were every particular of every duty, in all its bearings, circumstantially ramified, it would not so much direct the conduct, as furnish new pretences for neglecting it. Then, as now, it would be seen rather that the will is perverse, than the understanding unsatisfied. More amplification would not have lessoned objections. Those who complain now, that the rule is not explicit, would complain then, that it was tedious. A fuller exposition would neither have cleared doubts nor prevented disputes. It would then have been charged with redundancy, as it is now with defectiveness.

If the world carries contamination to the heart, it carries also to the right-minded a preservative; as the viper's blood is said to be an antidote for its bite. The living world is to such persons an improving exemplification of

the moral lessons of history. If we apply to our own improvement the recorded excellences or errors of which we read; if we are struck with the successes or defeats of ambition; the pursuits or disappointments of vanity; the sordid accumulations of avarice, or the wasting ravages of prodigality; if we are moved with instances of vice and virtue in men of whom we know nothing but what the historian is pleased to tell us, and of whom he perhaps knew not much more; if we read with interest of the violence of parties, of which both the leaders and the followers have been long laid in the dust; if we are affected, as every intelligent mind cannot but be affected, with these pictures of things, how much benefit may a well-directed mind derive from seeing them realized: from seeing the old scenes acted over again by living performers; from living himself among the *dramatis personæ* as one of the actors; from taking a personal interest in a repetition of things which he condemned or applauded when only coldly presented to his understanding, and at which his principles revolted or rejoiced, even in the dead letter of narrative. He now sees the same sentiments embodied, the same passions brought into action, similar opinions operating upon actual conduct.

If he is deeply touched when history presents to his view the errors of high and heroic minds, when it exhibits the abberrations of superior genius, how much more lively will be his regret, when he sees, among his own acquaintance, the ardour of a noble and ingenuous mind exclusively consumed on objects, which might indeed be accounted great, if this world were all, but which never gives any practical intimation that there is another. But how much more pungent will be his sorrow, when he observes lofty and sagacious spirits neglecting to make the most even of this brief state of being; —when he sees men who might have made the world a better thing than they found it, had they employed their superior powers of intellect in studying how they might please God, by promoting the best interests of his creatures; when he sees such understandings clouded by intemperance, such minds absorbed in studying the qualities of a race horse, or calculating the chances of a gaming table!

In another and a more estimable class of characters, he is struck with mingled admiration and concern, in observing what good and resembling imitations of religion are made by honour, sense, and spirit; how respectably moral honesty, kindness, and generosity may, to superficial observers, personate Christianity, may even execute the act of piety with an utter destitution of the principle. He sees in certain minds some masterly strokes of natural beauty, which at once dignify and embellish them, so as, on some occasions, to tempt him to forget that they are not religious. But these brilliant qualities are not infused into the entire character, the excellence is limited to a few shining points, and the hollows are proportioned to the heights. Rich in some splendid virtue, there is no uniformity in the principle; there is perhaps some allowed sin in the practice; while in the character of the real Christian, though there may be much infirmity, there is a desire of consistency—there is no deliberate transgression—there i even no unrepented error.

These living lessons the pious observer will turn to account. The impression thus made on his heart, from actual observation, will sink deeper, and be more durable, than the instruction to be obtained by a mere intellectual view of mankind, from information collected from writers, who are obliged to pick up facts, not from having witnessed them, but as they find them in preceding writers; men who know little of the causes of which they describe the effects, or the motives of the actions they record. History paints men, acute observation anatomizes them.

If he regret that his necessary duties in the world trench on the time he would gladly devote to religious pursuits, let him take comfort that these regrets, if sincere, are an earnest of his safety. The very corruptions to which he is witness, will experimentally convince him of the truth of a doctrine which is no where more completely learned than in the bustle of life. The perception of this evil in others, makes him watch against similar tendencies within; tendencies which only the grace daily invoked by him prevents from breaking out into action. This deep conviction of man's corruption, instead of imparing his benevolence, will improve it. It will teach him not to expect too much from so imperfect a being, as well as to bear with the errors which his belief of the doctrine had led him to expect. This, together with his intercourse with the world will cure him of that mistake so common to persons who have not lived in it, that of expecting no faults in those which a fond imagination, on a first acquaintance, had led them to believe perfect, and who, on the inevitable discovery, become too strongly disgusted with errors and imperfections, on which they ought to have reckoned. He will never use his full conviction of the truth of which we have been speaking to the purposes of unworthy distrust, or base suspicion. On the contrary, though he will exercise his discernment in the knowledge of men, and his discretion as to the confidence to be placed in them, he will not be ever on the look out to detect, much less to expose their errors. Though he, 'loves not the world' in the Scripture sense of the term, he loves the individuals of whom it is composed, with the affection of sympathy. He will put a large and liberal construction on their actions, but he will not stretch that latitude to the vindication of any thing that is corrupt in principle, or criminal in conduct. Nor will he be always on the defensive in his intercourse with them: he will not act with the narrow selfishness of the sordid trader, who is jealous of every man with whom he has business to transact, on no higher ground than lest he should lose money by him; while he tolerates in his character every vice which will not interfere with his pecuniary transactions.

It is his aim to reconcile that charity which believeth all things with that discrimination of character which shows us, not only so many who are bad, but so much imperfection, we may

say, so much evil, in the comparatively good. To love and serve those in whom we at the same time perceive no little moral defect, is turning our spiritual discernment to a practical account. This principle, while it serves to preserve us from an undue admiration of others, will teach us to suspect these, or other defects, in ourselves.

The Christian in the world, anxious to improve his scanty leisure, will rescue from mere diversion those hours which cannot prudently be subtracted from business. To a man thus circumstanced, the Sunday is felt to be indeed a blessing; to him it is emphatically 'delight.' Instead of appropriating it as a day of premeditated conviviality, he converts it into a stated season of enjoyment of another kind. He hardly needs the injunction to 'remember' to keep it holy, though he is not unmindful, that, of the ten commandments, it is the only one prefaced with that admonition. He considers the observance as almost more his privilege than his duty. The expectation of its return cheers him under the perplexities of the week. He anticipates it as a rest here, and as a foretaste of eternal rest. He enlarges his pious exercises with the more satisfaction, as he is clearly assured that he is not on this day in danger of trenching on his professional duties; and, from this reflection his heart more warmly expands in gratitude to Him whose day it more immediately is. He feels that, if it were barely a season ordained by some public act, a royal proclamation enjoining it as a necessary interval between the labours which close one week, and those which began another, a contrivance of ease, a measure of political prudence or personal tenderness to prevent the bodily machine and the overlaboured mind from wearing out, he would be grateful for its institution: but to him the day comes fraught with benefits and blessings of a still higher kind. It is an appointment of God; *that* entitles it to his reverence; it is an institution of spiritual mercy; it is the stated season for recruiting his mental vigour; for inspecting his accounts with his Maker; for taking a more exact survey of the state of his heart; for examining into his faults; for enumerating his mercies; for laying in, by prayer, fresh stores of faith and holiness; for repairing what both may have lost in the turmoil of the week. His heated passions have leisure to cool; his hurried mind to regain its tranquil tone; his whole internal state to be regulated; his mistakes to be reviewed; his temper to be new set; his piety to be braced up to the pitch from which it may have been sunk in the atmosphere he had been breathing. The pious man of business relishes his family society and fireside enjoyments with a keenness not often felt by others. If 'the harp, and the tabret, and the tabret, and the viol,' are not always heard in his feasts, he does what those who listen to them do not always remember to do, for he considers the works of the Lord, and regards the operations of his hands.' It is not enough for the devoted Christian that his life is dedicated to him who gave it, his spirit is, as it were, exhaled in his service.*

* It is to be regretted, that the members of a learned and honourable profession, and which has produced so many exemplary characters, should appoint their consultations on Sundays. It is urged in excuse, that they cannot clash with any public courts or sittings on that day. The leading men, by this custom, force some of those whose practice is less established into a breach of their duty, against which their consciences perhaps revolt. Might not one of these two sacrifices obviate the necessity which is pleaded in its vindication? Might they not either reject such a superfluity of business as induces it—or, if that be too much to expect, might they not subtract the time from their social and convivial hours?

CHAP. XXIV.

Difficulties and advantages of the Christian in the world.

There are two things of which a wise man will be scrupulously careful, his conscience and his credit. Happily they are almost inseparable concomitants; they are commonly kept or lost together; the same things which wound the one, usually gives a blow to the other: yet, it must be confessed, that conscience and a mere worldly credit are not, in all instances, allowed to subsist together. God and our hearts—we speak of hearts which are looked into and examined—always condemn us for the same things—things, perhaps, for which we do not suffer in the opinion of the world: the world, in return, not seldom condemns us for actions, for which we have the approbation of God and our consciences. Is it right to put the verdict of such opposite judges on an equality, nay to abide by that which will be less than nothing when *his* sentence, whose favour is eternal life, shall be finally pronounced?

Between a wounded conscience and a wounded credit there is the same difference as between a crime and a calamity. Of two inevitable evils, religion instructs us to submit to that which is inferior and involuntary. As much as reputation exceeds every worldly good, so much, and far more, is conscience to be consulted before credit—if credit that can be called, which is derived from the acclamations of a mob, whether composed of 'the great vulgar or the small.'

Yet are we not perpetually seeing, that to secure this worthless fame, peace and conscience are sacrificed? For to what but a miserably false estimate of the relative value of these two blessings; what but the preference of character to duty—in support, too, of a rotten part of it—is it, that the wretched system of duelling not only maintains its ground, but is increasing with a frightful rapidity? If we have, perhaps, never heard of a truly religious man engaged in a duel,† it is not that, with all his caution, he is not liable to provocations and insults, as well as other men; nor that he has no quick sense of injuries, no spirit to repel attacks, and no courage to defend himself. He who bears insults is made of like passions with him who revenges them; his pride longs to break out if it dared; for even a good man, as the prelate quoted in the last chapter observes, 'has more to do with this one viper, than with all his other corruptions.'

† Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the first of our deistical writers, and the last hero of our ancient chivalry, with that fantastic combination of devotion and gallantry which characterized the profession of knighthood, tells us in the memoirs of his own life, that he strictly maintained the religious observance of the Sabbath, except when called out to fight a duel for a point of honour which he seemed to have thought a paramount duty.

But, among other causes, his safety lies in this, that he has always endeavoured to keep clear of those initiatory offences which lead to this catastrophe; it is because he has been habitually governed by principles of a directly contrary tendency, and has not the lesson of forbearance to learn, when he is called upon to practise it: because he has not indulged himself in those habits, and as little as may be in those societies which lay a man open to the consequences of which ungoverned appetites are the source: because he has always considered pride and passion as the possible seeds of murder; an impure glance as the first approach to that crime which is the ordinary source of duelling—the combined violation of these two commandments, being as closely connected, in practice, as is their position in the Decalogue. It is observable, that while the shifts and stratagems to which a man is commonly driven by illicit connexions, so often lead to duelling, yet that the charge of that crime itself, or of any other equally atrocious, far more rarely provokes a challenge, than the charge of the lie, to which the crime has compelled him to resort. Can there be a more striking instance of the false estimate of character and virtue, than that the offence is not made to consist in the falsehood itself, but in the accusation of it.

The man of mere worldly principles keeps himself in the broad way, which, should events occur, and temptations arise to irritate him, may at any time lead to such a termination. His habits of life, his choice of associates, his systematic resolution to revenge every insult, makes his common path a path of danger. His pride is always ready primed; he carries the inflammable matter in his habit, and the first spark may cause an explosion; while the man of principle, in addition to all the other guards before enumerated, wants, indeed, but this single consideration to deter him from the spirit of duelling; that it is the act of all others which stands in the most determined opposition to the law of God, and the spirit of the Gospel; that it is a studied, deliberate, premeditated subversion of one of the most imperious duties of Christianity, by making it infamous to forgive injuries.

And even if a man be more correct in his habits, still if the maxims of the world, and not those of Christianity, govern him, he loses sight of the great principles which would restrain excesses in temper, as well as in conduct. He first loses sight of these, perhaps by negligence in private devotion, possibly by a careless attendance on public worship. Thus freeing himself from these observances, he loses sight of the obligations of religion, and losing this strongest 'muzzle of restraint,' it is the less wonder that a small provocation tempts him to offer bloody sacrifices to that fantastic but cruel idol, worldly honour. It is the less wonder that a neglected, even where there is not a perverted principle, should end in the murder of a friend, and the destruction of his own soul; for of a merely convivial friendship, a duel is no very uncommon termination.

But to return.—In the ordinary pursuits of life, the good man differs but little from others, in the keenness with which he embarks in an enterprise, or in the diligence with which he prosecutes it; but he carries it on in another spirit; he is not less solicitous in the pursuit, but there is less perturbation in his solicitude; he makes no undue sacrifices to attain his object. He seeks the divine blessing, not that he may slacken his own exertions, but that he may be directed in them, supported under them. Sanguine, perhaps, by nature, he yet takes into the account the probabilities of disappointment: this, when it occurs, he bears as one, who, though careful of the motive and mode of his conduct, had put the affair into the hands of the Master of events. His failure does not discourage him from fresh exertions, when occasions equally right present themselves. He is grateful for success, but not intoxicated by it. Under defeat he is resigned, but not desponding. He measures the intrinsic value of an object by asking his own mind, though he thinks so highly of its importance now, what he shall probably think of it when his ardour is cooled, and especially, what he shall think of it when all things shall be brought into judgment. This question settled, either moderates or augments the interest he takes in it.

Knowing that whatever he proposes in the way of public good, is liable to be suspected of imprudence, or mistaken zeal, he turns this exposure to suspicion to his own advantage. It leads him to examine his project more accurately to spy out its weak side, if it have any; and to anticipate, by the operations of a well exercised judgment, the objections which his opponents are likely to make. Foreseeing the points which may create opposition, he guards against it, either by altering his plan, if defective, or preparing to defend it, if sound. One of his great difficulties, and yet it is his only security, will be his custom of referring all matters in debate, 'to the law and to the testimony.' This will lead him constantly to oppose principles to expediency. Of this incommodious integrity, he must abide the censure and the consequences. He will have no share in the crooked arts and intrigues by which some men rise so fast, and become so popular. He will detest craft almost as much as fraud, and the pitiful shifts of a narrow policy, as much as he will love the light and open path of truth and honesty.—He doth not slacken in his undeviating strictness, though he is aware, that this is the quality which peculiarly exposes him to misrepresentation. Exertion, struggle, conflict, these are the trials for which he prepares himself. Thankful for tranquillity when it can be honestly obtained, enjoying repose when he has fairly earned it; he yet knows that this is not the world in which they are to be looked for with any certainty, or enjoyed with any continuance; and this conviction of its instability and fluctuation is one of the many arguments with which he seeks to arm himself against the fear of death.

The unequal distribution of the good things of this life, the inferior success of men of more virtue, higher talent, and a better outset, than others of his acquaintance, whose beginning was low, and whose deserts equivocal, remind him that prosperity is no sure test of merit, and that the favour of heaven is not to be estimated by

success. God, he recollects, has made no special promise of prosperity to his children. When given, it is to be esteemed no certain mark of his approbation; when withdrawn, it is often in mercy; when withheld, it is because God has higher designs for his less prosperous servants. As to himself, the events of every day teach him, that he had expected more from human life than it had to bestow, and that his disappointments arise not less from his own sanguine temper, than from the deceits of that world which it had overrated.

The world, especially, we may here remark, the commercial world, particularly in these awful times, is calculated to teach forbearance far more than sequestred life, because men often suffer so severely in their fortune and credit by the errors or misfortunes of others. If the good man suffer by his own fault, he will find a fresh motive for humility; if by the fault of another, for patience; if more directly from the hand of God, for submission. Whatever be the fluctuations of his fortune, his faith will gain stability, for he will discern an invisible hand directing all events for his ultimate good. If he is placed in a state of peculiar agitation, God intends to lead him by it to seek his rest where only it can be found. If in a state of singular difficulty, it is to show him his own weakness, and his immediate dependance on him, who gives strength to the weak. This principle admitted, will furnish new motives to watchfulness and prayer, without any diminution of activity or spirit.

His observations on the gradual process, by which the love of money monopolizes the hearts of others, teach him to guard his own against its encroachments. He sees that the first designs of men are commonly moderate. Few take in at one view all the length they go afterwards. They look not beyond a certain eminence. On this they fix as the summit of their desires. But what appeared high at a distance sinks when approached; is nothing when attained;—'Alps rise on Alps;'—a further distance presents a further height; this, they are sure, will bound their desires: this attained, they are resolved to retire and dedicate their lives and their riches to the end for which, they persuade themselves, they have been toiling. But, with the acquisition, the desire increases; wants grow out of riches. The moderate man is become insatiable. The principle thrives with the attainment of its object. Though hope is exchanged for possession, yet the restless principle continues to work, and will work on, unless a higher principle, by which he is every day less likely and less desirous to be governed, should arise to check it.

Society being composed of intelligent human beings, the wise man knows that something may be generally learned from it, relative to the human character; that some benefit may be reaped, even if little positive good appear in it; and more does sometimes appear, than we are willing to put to profit. Lessons may be extracted from the very faults of men; from the vehemence of their passions, the mistakes of their judgment, the blindness of their prejudice.

The Holy Scriptures frequently make the anxious diligence of men, in the pursuit of worldly advantages, a lesson which a better man would do well to improve upon in his higher pursuits. He may find in *their* industry a standard, though not a model: the wisdom he learns from this generation, he will convert to the purposes of the children of light. The world's wise man is ever on the watch for advancing his projects. If he contract an acquaintance of importance, his first thought is, how he may make the most of him; the Christian is equally careful to turn the acquisition of a pious friend to his own account, but with a higher view.

The mind, on the watch for improvement, will improve by the very errors of others.—Virtue, our divine Master has taught us, may take some profitable lessons from vice. The activity of the fraudful steward may stimulate the negligent Christian. From the perseverance of the malignant in their patient prosecution of revenge, he may learn fortitude under discouragements, and resolution under difficulties. Injuries may teach him the value of justice, may set him upon investigating its principle, and guarding against its violation. The wiliness of the designing may keep his understanding on the alert, and confirm the prudence it has excited. Temptations from without strengthen his powers of resistance; his own faults show him his own weakness, as it is foreign aggression which forms heroes, and domestic opposition which makes statesmen.

His thirst for human applause will be abated, when he observes in those around him, the unexpected attainment of popularity so soon followed by its unmerited loss. When he beholds the rapid transfer of power, it will more than whole tomes of philosophy, show him that 'favour is deceitful.' He will moderate his desires of great riches, when he sees by what sacrifices they are sometimes obtained, and to what temptations the possession leads. He will be less likely to repine that others are reaching the summit of ambition, whether they achieve it by talents which he does not possess, or attain it by steps which he would not choose to climb, or maintain it by concessions which he would not care to make. The pangs of party with which he sees some of his friends convulsed, and the turbulent anxiety with which they watch the prognostics of its rise and fall, keep him sober without making him indifferent. He preserves his temper with his attachments, and his integrity with his preferences, because he is habitually watching how he may serve the state, and not how, by increasing her perplexities, he may advance himself.

The use he thus makes of the world will not carry him to the length of entangling himself in its snares. Though he maintains a necessary intercourse with men of opposite character, he will not push that intercourse further than occasion requires. He will transact business with them with frankness and civility, but he will not follow them to any objectionable lengths. He is aware, that though a wise man will never choose an infected atmosphere, yet 'He who fixes our lot in life' will protect him in it in the way of duty, and will furnish an antidote to the contagion. A courageous piety doubles its caution when exposed to an impure air, but a pru

dent piety will never voluntarily plunge into it. It will never forget, that if the corruptions of the world are so dangerous, they are rendered so by those of our own hearts, since we carry about us a constitution disposed to infection. The true Christian will make a conscience of letting it appear, that he differs in very important points from many of those with whom business or society brings them into contact; lest, by the facility and kindness of his general behaviour, they should be led into an error as to his principles. For worldly men, having been accustomed to connect narrowness, reserve, and gloom, with serious piety, they might infer from his pleasant deportment and frank address, that his principles were as lax as his manners are disengaged.

He will, therefore, be careful, not unnecessarily to alienate them by any thing forbidding in his exterior; he will cheerfully fall in with any plan of theirs consistent with his own principles; and more especially, should it be any plan of benevolence and general utility, and one more promising than his own, he will never feel backward to promote it, through the mean fear of transferring the popularity of the measure to another. Yet he acts, nevertheless, as knowing there is no humility in a man's taking a false measure of his own understanding, and therefore does not give us his independence of mind, when the superiority of the scheme of the other does not carry conviction to his judgment. He will first clear his motive, and, next, his prudence in the measure, and then be as prompt in action as those who rush into it without deliberation or principle.

He keeps his ultimate end in view, even in the most ordinary concerns, and on occasions which to others may not seem likely to promote it. He knows that good breeding will give currency to good sense; that good sense adds credit to virtue, and even helps to strip religion of its tendency to displease.—By his exactness in performing the common duties of life more accurately than other men, he may lead them to look from the action up to the principle which produced it; and when they see the advantages arising from such carefulness of conduct, they may be induced to examine into the reasons; and from inquiring to adopting is not always a remote step. He may thus lead them into an insensible imitation, without the vain idea of presenting himself as a model; for he wishes them to admire, not him, but the source from which he draws both what he believes and what he is.

While he suggests hints for their benefit, he is willing they should think the suggestion their own; that they owe it to reflection, and not to instruction. Like the great Athenian philosopher, he does not so much aim to teach wisdom to others as to put them in the way of finding it out for themselves. His piety does not lessen his urbanity, even towards those, who are obviously deficient in some points, which he deems of high importance. If they are useful members of the great body of society, he is the first to commend their activity, to acknowledge their amiable qualities, to do justice to their speeches or writings, while they are disconnected with dangerous or doubtful objects. On general subjects he never labours to discredit their opinions, unless they obviously stand in the way of something of more worth. But all these cheerfully allowed merits will never make him lose sight of any grand deficiency in the principle, of any thing erroneous in the tendency.

Of his own religion he neither makes a parade nor a secret; he is of opinion, that to avow his sentiments, prevents mistakes, saves trouble, obviates conjectures, and maintains independence. He acknowledges them with modesty, and defends them with firmness. On other occasions, instead of shutting himself up in a close and sullen reserve, because others do not agree with him in the great cause which lies nearest his heart, he is glad that the general diffusion of knowledge has so multiplied the points at which well-educated men can have access to the minds of each other; points at which improvements in taste and science may be reciprocally communicated, the tone of conversation raised, and society rendered considerably useful, and sometimes in a high degree profitable.

But notwithstanding the clearness of his own spirit, and the intimations of an enlightened conscience, yet he carries about with him such a modest sense of his own liableness to what is wrong, as keeps up in his mind the idea that the error may possibly be on his side. This feeling, though it never makes him adopt through weakness the opinion of another, makes him always humble in the defence of his own. He opposes what is obviously bad with an earnest but sober zeal, a fervid but unboisterous warmth, a vigorous but calm perseverance.

He will not hunt for popularity; he knows that this is one of the common dangers from which even good men are not exempt; for after all, the mere good men of the world do not monopolize all credit. Highly principled and pious men form a powerful and increasing minority, which, by concord, firmness, and prudence, often makes no inconsiderable figure. When viewed collectively,

> 'Bright as a sun the sacred city shines.

Each individual, however, according as he contributes or may fancy he contributes to the brightness, is in danger of priding himself on the general effect. And many a weak or designing man, placing himself under the broad shelter of what he delights to call *the religious world*, limits his zeal to the credit of being accounted a member, instead of extending it to the arduous duties it imposes, and while he superciliously decries many a worthy person, who without the pretension, performs the functions, he is as full of the world as the world is of itself. Popularity thus sought after and obtained, whether within or without the pale, even of a religious community, is of a dangerous tendency, and a truly Christian mind will alike tremble to bestow or receive the praise.

But if the Christian character we have been faintly attempting to sketch, possesses a commanding station, either in fortune, rank, or talent, especially if he combine them; his character without any assumption of his own, without

any affectation of superiority, will, by its own weight, its own attraction, above all, by its consistency, be a sort of rallying point, round which the well disposed, the timid, and the young, will resort to obtain a sanction, and to fortify their principles. For, if it is not the *prevailing* principle, there is yet much more piety in the world, than the pious themselves are willing to allow. If so strange a phrase may be allowed, we should almost suspect that, in a certain class, there is more good hypocrisy than bad; more who conceal their piety, than who make a display of it. Many, who are secretly and sincerely religious, want courage to avow their sentiments, want resolution to act up to them, either because the popular tide runs another way, or because they dread the imputation of singularity, and are afraid of raising a portentous cry against themselves.

The good man respects the world's opinion, without making it the leading motive of his conduct. He never provokes hostility by any arrogant intimation that he does not care what people think of him, a conduct not more offensive to others, than indicative of a self-sufficient spirit. He is careful to avoid a particular *cut*. He will not be pointed at for any trifling peculiarity. He fences in, not only his ordinary, but his best actions, with prudence, well knowing how much the manner may expose the matter to misrepresentation. He does this not merely for his own credit, but because, to a certain degree, with his reputation are involved the good of others and the honour of religion. He endeavours, as far as he can honestly do it, to remove prejudices, which an imprudent piety rather glories in augmenting, and thus widens the separation between the two classes of characters. Whereas, that which is intrinsically good should be always outwardly amiable. He, therefore, will not make his departure from the order which general usage has established, observable in any of the harmless and accredited modes of life. He will not voluntarily augment that wonder which his departure from the less innocent fashions of the world must excite. The wonder will be sufficiently great, why, in stronger cases, he should subject himself to a discipline different from theirs, and they will ask where is the use of aiming to be better than those whom they call good?

By the cheerful alacrity with which he performs and receives all acts of kindness, he gives the best answer to Lord Shaftsbury's character of Christianity, 'that it is so taken up with the care of our future happiness, as to throw away all the present:' a sneer which is about as true as the other sarcasms of this eloquent but superficial reasoner; for if religion does call for some sacrifices of pleasure and of profit, yet every part of its practice increases our real happiness, by the augmentation of our own virtue, as much as it advances that of others; by its promotion of kindness, beneficence, good will, and good order.

He not only refuses his time and his example to scenes of luxury and dissipation; his superfluous wealth has also a higher destination; he must not however, be expected to aim at a primitive frugality, many of the superfluities of life having in some measure, become classed among its necessaries. The spirit of a Christian can never be a penurious spirit. His habits of living will be proportioned to his rank and fortune, taking, however, the average expenditure of many of the more discreet. He will never, even on religious grounds, by the example of parsimony, furnish the sordid with a pretence for accumulation.

He has another powerful motive for avoiding extravagance. He knows that a well regulated economy is the only infallible source of independence. He will not therefore, lavish in idle splendour a fortune, that he may be driven to recruit by sacrifices, which by robbing him of his freedom, will diminish his virtue. He thinks that what Tacitus has said of a public exchequer is not less true of a private purse, that what is exhausted by profligacy, must be repaid by rapacity. This incommodious rectitude will expose him to the dislike of less correct men; for, after all that has been urged against the adoption of religious doctrines, it is not so much the strictness of opinion, as of practice, which renders a man obnoxious.

He may be of any religion he pleases, provided he will live like those who have none. If he be convivial and accommodating, they will not care if he worship Brama and Veeshnoo though they would not perhaps forgive his professing the Hindoo faith, if it involved the necessity of their dining with him upon rice; nor would he be pardoned for embracing the doctrines of the Arabian Prophet while the Koran continues to prohibit the use of wine.

Though pleasure is not the leading object of his pursuit, he yet finds more than those, who spend their lives in pursuit of nothing else. He finds the range of innocent and elegant enjoyment sufficiently ample and attractive, without being driven for a resource, to the disqualifying grossness of sensuality or the relaxing allurements of dissipation. The fine arts, in all their lovely and engaging forms of beauty, the ever new delights of literature, whether wooed in its lighter graces, or sought in its more substantial attractions, the exchange

> From grave to gay, from lively to severe,

shed sweet, and varied, and exhaustless charms on his leisure hours, and send him back with renewed freshness, added vigour, and increased animation to his necessary employments.

Though the strictly pious man is more exposed to temptation in the world than in retirement, yet he finds in it reasons which stimulate him to more circumspection. He is aware that he lies more open to observation, and of course to censure. As he is more observed by others, he more carefully observes himself. He watches his own faults with the same vigilance with which worldly men watch the faults of others, and for the same reason, that he may turn them to his own profit; the more he is surrounded with temptations, the more he is driven to feel his want of divine protection. If his talents or exertions are flattered, he flies more earnestly to *his* direction, 'from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.' We appeal to the pious rea-

der, whether he does not frequently feel more circumspect and less confident in society from which he fears deterioration, than in that on which he depends for improvement; whether he does not feel a sort of perilous security in company, in which an expansion of heart lessons his self-distrust; and whether he has never, by leaning on the friend, looked less to Him 'without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy.

If in debate he is sometimes accused of showing too much warmth in defence of religion, while its opponent, by his superior calmness, establishes his own character for moderation and good temper, it is because it costs the latter little to manifest a coolness which is the natural effect of indifference.—The man who plays for nothing needs not be moved whatever turn the game may take; while he, whose dearest interests are at stake, will not easily hide the emotion which he cannot but feel. When king Soloman decreed, as a test of affection, that the living child should be cut in pieces, the pretended mother calmly submitted to the decision.—She had nothing to lose. Her hope was dead. She would enjoy seeing her competitor reduced to her own desolate state; while the real mother, who had a vital interest in the object to be sacrificed, was tortured at the proposal. The genuineness of the feeling betrayed the reality of the relation.

The Christian, circumstanced as we have described him, hardly daros wish for an uninterrupted smooth and prosperous course; for, though he endeavours to sit loose to the world, every severe disappointment or privation makes him feel that he still clings too fondly for it; every trial and every loss, therefore, make him relax something of the firmness of his grasp.

Is your Christian, then, perfect, you will perhaps ask? Ask himself. With deep and sincere self-abasement he will answer in the negative. He will not only confess more failings than even his accusers ascribe to him, but he will own what they do not always charge him with—sins. He will acknowledge that there is no natural difference between himself and his censurer, but that, through divine grace, the one prays and struggles against those corruptions, the very existence of which the other does not suspect.

The peace of the confirmed Christian lies not at the mercy of events. As on the agitated ocean, storms and tempests never divert the faithful needle from its invariable object, so the distractions of the world shake not *his* confidence in Him who governs it. He remembers that these winds and waves are still bearing him onward to his haven, while on the stormy passage, they enable him to exhibit a trying but a constant evidence that God may be honoured in all, even in the most unpromising situations. Even in the worst condition, a real Christian is sure of the presence of his Maker, not only of his essential presence, which he has in common with all, but the presence of his grace; not only the sense of his being, but the support of his promise. God never appoints his servants to a difficult station, but he gives them the assurance of assistance in it, and of support under it. The solemn injunction, 'Be strong and work,' thrice repeated by the prophet, to reprove the dilatory builders of the second temple, was effectually enforced by the animating promise which followed it; *I will be with you.* When the disciples were sent forth by their divine Master to the grandest, but most perilous task, to which embassadors were ever appointed, they must have sunk under the conflicts which awaited, the dangers which threatened, and the deaths which met them; but the single promise *I will be with you*, was to them strength, and light, and life. The Christian militant, though called to a milder warfare, has the same reiterated assurance; *I will be with you always even to the end of the world.*

CHAP. XXV.

Candidus.

Candidus is a genuine son of the Reformation but being a layman, he does not think it necessary to define his faith so constantly as some others do, by an incessant reference to the Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies; though this reference would accurately express his sentiments: but, he observes, that it is become a kind of party standard equally erected by each side in intended opposition to the other, so that the equivocal ensign would not determine to which he belongs. He gives, however, the most indisputable proof of his zeal for these formularies, by the invariable conformity of his life and language to their principles.

From the warmth of his feelings, and the strength of his attachment to the church which fostered him, Candidus was once in no little danger of becoming a vehement party-man; he was, however, cured by a certain reluctance he found in his heart to undertake to hate half the world, which he found must be a necessary consequence.—Observation soon taught him, that Christians would be far more likely to escape the attack of unbelievers, if they could be brought to agree among themselves; but he saw with regret, that religion, instead of being considered as a common cause, was split into factions, so that the general interest was neglected, not to say, in some instances, nearly betrayed. And while the liege subjects of the same sovereign are carrying on civil war for petty objects and inconsiderable spots of ground, that strength, which should have been concentrated for the general defence, is spent in mutual skirmishes, and mischievous though unimportant hostilities; and that veneration of course forfeited, with which even the acknowledged enemy would have been compelled to behold an united Church.

Candidus is, however, firm in his attachments though not exacting in his requisitions; catholic, but not latitudinarian; tolerant, not from indifference, but principle. He contemplates, with admiration, the venerable fabric under whose shelter he is protected. He adheres to it, not so much from habit as affection. His adherence is the effect of conviction, otherwise his tenacity might be prejudice. It is founded in education, strengthened by reflection, and

confirmed by experience. But though he contemplates our ecclesiastical institutions with filial reverence himself, he allows for the effect of education, habit and conscience in others, who do not view them with his eyes. He is sorry for those who refuse to enter into her portal; he is more sorry for those who depart out of it, but far more concerned is he, for those who remain within her pale, with a temper hostile to her interests, with principles foreign to her genius, with a conduct unsanctified by her spirit.

Like a true lover, he delights not to expatiate on any imperfection she may have; but he will not, like an absurd lover, insist on any imperfection as an excellence. Persuaded that a mole or a pimple is no material diminution of beauty, he will no more magnify them into a deformity than he will deny their existence. His mind is so occupied with essential points, and so satisfied with their substantial worth, that he relinquishes whatever is of no vital importance to those microscopic eyes, which, being able to take in only the diminutive, value themselves on the detection of specks, as a discovery of their own, though keener eyes had discovered them long before, but slighted them as insignificant. Satisfied that it is the best of all the churches which exist, he never troubles himself to inquire if it is the best that is possible. In the church of England he is contented with excellence, and is satisfied to wait for perfection till he is admitted a member of the Church triumphant.

Candidus made early the discovery of a secret which Charles the Fifth did not discover, till by his ignorance of it, he had thinned the human race—the incurable diversity of human opinions. This irremediable difference he turned to its only practical purpose, not the vain endeavour to convince others, but the less hopeless aim of improving his own forbearance. He even doubted whether this disagreement, though a misfortune in the aggregate, was not even more calculated to promote individual piety, than an uniformity which would not have called this feeling into exercise.

The more he examines Scripture (and he is habitually examining it,) the more he is persuaded that the principles of his church are identically with the word of God; while he is enabled, by the same examination, to drink more deeply into that spirit of love, which warms his heart with kindness towards every conscientious Christian, who on some points thinks differently. His attachment is definite, but his charity knows no limits.

He observes that the loudest clamour for the Establishment is not always raised by the most pious, nor the most affectionate of her disciples; he therefore does not rejoice when he sees her honoured name hoisted as a political signal by those, who are careless of her spiritual prosperity; and he sometimes finds no inconsiderable difference between those who toast her, and those who study to promote her best interests; though the former obtain the reputation, which the others are only solicitous to deserve. He evinces his own affection by his zeal in defending her cause when attacked, by his prudence in never causelessly provoking the attack. Anxious that the walls of the sacred temple should be impregnable, he is still more anxious that the fires of her altars should burn with undecaying brightness; and that while her guardians are properly watching over the security of the one, the flame of the other be not extinguished. He gives the most unequivocal proof that he attends faithfully to her doctrines, by never separating them from her precepts, while he endeavours to incorporate both into his practice; adorning them by his example, recommending them in his writings, and illustrating them in his conversation.

If he produce little sensation among the intemperate, who exhibit their fidelity to the church by always representing her as on the very verge of destruction; yet he would, were the danger present, go greater lengths in her defence than some of her more declamatory champions; nay he does more now to avert her ruin, and they who seem to make her safety depend on their clamour. If he is not perpetually predicting open war, he is watchful against the hollow security of a false peace. The most difficult but not the least important part of his care, is not more to vindicate her against avowed enemies, than against friends at once vociferous and supine.

Candidus, though a good lover, is a bad hater, and it is this defect of hatred, which with a certain class, brings his love into suspicion. He has observed some who evince their attachment by their virulence against what they disapprove, rather than by cultivating, in support of what is right, that spirit which is 'first pure, then peaceable,' and which, if it be not peaceable, is not pure.—These are more remarkable for their dread of external evils, than their solicitude for the promotion of internal piety. Their religion consists rather in repulsion than attraction. On the other hand, it must be observed, that Candidus has none of that pliancy which, in this relaxed age, obtains in a different quarter, the praise of liberality from those who, thinking one religion about as good as another, are of course tolerant of any, because indifferent to all.

He has learned from the errors of two opposite parties, that fanaticism teaches men to despise religion, and bigotry to hate it. He knows that his candour is esteemed laxity by the prejudiced, and his firmness intolerance by the irreligious. There is, however, no ambiguity in his moderation; and he never, for the sake of popularity with either party, leaves it doubtful on what ground he takes his stand. Nor does he ever renounce a right principle, because one party abuses it, or another denies its existence; and while he deprecates the assumption of *names* by impostors, it does not alter his opinion of the *things* they originally signified; for instance, he does not think patriotism is a romance, nor disinterestedness a chimera, nor fervent piety a delusion, nor charity unorthodox; nor a saint necessarily a hypocrite.

He observes among his acquaintance, that there are some who sedulously endeavour to fix the brand of fanaticism on certain doctrines, which both the Bible and the Church not only recognize, but consider as fundamental, as the key-stone of the sacred arch on the strength of which our whole superstructure rests. These

doctrines, while they eject them from their own creed, they confound, in the creed of others, with certain dangerous opinions, with which they are by no means necessarily connected, though they uniformly charge those who adopt the one class with invariably maintaining the other. It is in vain that the persons so charged disavow the opinions; it is to no purpose that they only desire to be allowed to know what they hold, and what they reject.

Candidus, however, undaunted by clamour, and unmoved by insinuation, tenaciously maintains the doctrine of human apostacy, of salvation by grace through faith, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit in renovating the heart. In her avowal of man's corruption, he insists that the church of England is most emphatical. 'Read,' said he one day, in earnest conversation with one whom he could scarcely consider but as a virtual Socinian within the pale of the Establishment, 'read the pointed and explicit confession with which her service opens.'—He holds the same language with some others to whom the Church is a higher authority than the Bible, in regard to a subject next in connexion with that of human weakness, namely, the agency of the Divine Spirit; he remarks that both these doctrines are recognized in every prayer and in every office; that they are especially acknowledged in the *Collects*, those brief but beautiful effusions of devotion, which, for strength of expression, condensation of the sense, and neatness of composition, not only surpass every thing in the age in which they were composed, but remain unrivalled in the similar addresses of our own time, whose best praise it is, that, in this period of fine writing, our petitionary forms are accounted more or less excellent, as they approach nearer, or recede farther from, those models. Read their self-abasing acknowledgments —'Thou, God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do'—'O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee'—'Because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall'—'Grant that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without Thee, may, by Thee, be enabled to live according to thy will'—'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy holy Spirit'—'Because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace.'

But there would be no end of enumeration. The same doctrines run through, and are incorporated with, the whole Liturgy. To get rid of them, mere omissions would be altogether insufficient, we must tear up the whole web, we must weave another, we must weave it too with new materials; for the old threads would retain the colour of the old doctrines, and communicate the original character to the new piece; it is not only the old form that must be new cast, but new principles that must be infused, a new train of sentiments that must be adopted, in short a new religion that must be substituted.

Candidus observes, that it is a proof how different the views of some of our contemporaries are on this subject from those of the primitive church, that while, with some of the former, divine influence is a theme of derision rather than of reverence; in the other, whatever was pure and holy, was ascribed to its operation. At the same time, being a diligent reader of ecclesiastical history, as well as an accurate observer of what passes before his eyes, he is aware what abuses have been and are still practised, and what deceits carried on, under pretence of being *the work of the Spirit.* The importance of the doctrine accounts for the imitations and counterfeits to which it is exposed; and he knows that the abuse of a thing is always pernicious in proportion to its excellence. The Old and New Testament abound with instances. To those of the former St. Peter reverts to guard his converts from those of the latter—'There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.' Another Apostle warns his hearers against the mischiefs which he himself had seen produced by these impious pretenders, by instructing them to 'try the spirits, whether they be of God.' Hence Candidus advises, with an able divine,* to try the spirits ourselves, not by putting them upon supernatural work, but to try them by a more infallible rule—by the doctrine they teach, that is, by its invariable conformity with Scripture. He thinks the same rule and the same necessity subsist now, in as full force, as when the injunction was given.

Candidus is aware that it is necessary, not only to be accurate in the use of his own terms, but to be on his guard against being misled by the inaccuracy of the terms employed by others. He therefore takes care to ascertain the character and temper of the man by whom any ambiguous term is used, as well as of him to whom the term is applied; without this caution he could not decide on the justness of the application. Even the founder of the Epicurean sect could say, *a man cannot live happily without living wisely.* Now, though every man, whatever be his principles, must assent to this truth as a general proposition, yet the phrase, 'living wisely,' conveyed a very different idea in the school of an atheistical philosopher, to what it would have conveyed in the follower of Zeno, and more especially in the disciple of Christ. Enthusiasm is one of these ambiguous terms.

Candidus is prudent on a principle which is sometimes denied. He considers that prudence is, in an ardent character, more likely to be an effect of grace than even zeal; because in the exercise of zeal he is indulging his natural temper, whereas, in the other case he is subduing it; and he has found that to resist a propensity is generally more the effect of principle than to gratify it.—Hence, he infers that if resistance be a work of grace, the sluggish and the cold hearted may judge of their own conquest over nature by a superinduced zeal, while he presumes *he* is conquering his own vehemence by a superinduced prudence; thus the same truth is illustrated by directly opposite instances.

Against enthusiasm, therefore, it is unnecessary to caution the discreet and enlightened Candidus. He avoids it as naturally as a wise man avoids folly, as a sober man shuns extravagance. But then it is the thing itself, and not

* Dr. Owen

what bigots call so; it is the real entity, and not the spectre, against which he is on his guard; for not being superstitious, he is not terrified by phantoms and goblins. He laments when he encounters a real enthusiast, because he knows that, even if honest, he is pernicious. But though he thinks him highly blameable, he does not think him worse 'than murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers.' He thinks enthusiasm mischievous, but he does not think it worse than impiety, worse than intemperance, worse than infidelity, worse than intolerance, worse than any other flagitious vice; especially he does not think it worse than all the other vices put together. Yet this he might be almost tempted to believe was the case, when he sees other vices comparatively left to enjoy themselves, and this doughty enormity, imaginary as well as real, singly attacked with the combined force of all the weapons which ought to be in turn applied to the whole family of sin. As he is very skilful in symptoms, he takes care to ascertain evident marks of the mania, palpable diagnostics of the rabid bite, before he pronounces on the disease, or proceeds to secure himself from the contagion.

By his well-exercised judgment, he can generally discover the different causes of the actual distemper. He can distinguish whether the patient is sick of a deluded imagination, or from having been in contact with the infected; whether he is mismanaged by artful, or injured by ignorant prescribers; whether the malady lies in the weakness of his natural powers, the agitation of his animal spirits, or the vanity of his mind—whether it be an inflammation on the brain, or a tumour in the heart—some or all of these appearances commonly indicating the fanatical fever. In either case he heartily subscribes to the reality and danger of the distemper, but even then he does not positively pronounce that the weak are wicked, or the disordered counterfeits.

But if, as is not seldom the case, he finds the appellation conferred only because the objects of it are deeply sensible of the unspeakable importance of religion, and the infinite value of eternal things—because they are no more afraid of feeling than of understanding the great truths of Christianity—because they think their souls are not a property to be complimented away through fear: if he find, that with all their warmth they are rational, with all their zeal they are humble, with all their energy they are consistent, with all their spirituality they are sober; if they obey the precepts of the Gospel as faithfully as they believe its doctrines—if their religion do not lie more in profession than in performance—if they give a striking evidence of their love of God, by their tenderness to their fellow-creatures—if they are as liberal to their bodily wants, as those are, who forget to take their souls into the account—if their piety appear as much in their practice as in their discourse, and their prudence keep pace with their earnestness, then he will not be forward to impute to them, as the unpardonable sin, those animated sentiments which are to themselves 'peace and joy in believing,' and to others benignity, philanthropy, and kindness.

And as he does not call well-directed zeal fanaticism, nor generous ardour delirium, so he does not rank those who believe in the omnipotence of divine grace among the enemies to virtuous action, nor does he suspect that the advocates for strenuous exertion are sworn foes to faith. Nor does he ever disavow a doctrine which he has adopted on conviction, because it may happen to be associated in the mind of another man, with other doctrines which he himself cannot adopt. And as he knows something of the internal constitution of the human heart and the nature of religious affections, he distinguishes between the sanguine temper of youth, between that warmth, which, in a rightly turned mind, time will cool, and experience temper, and which will retain no more than a due degree of spirit, when its first effervescence has subsided; he distinguishes this spirit from that blind zeal and headlong violence, which, as they are a part of no religion, so they are a discredit to any.

He has observed, that the reason why we see such misshapen representation of religion set up for the finger of reproach or ridicule to point at, is, that the reviler has not been looking out for truth; he has not taken his draught, we will not say from the highest model, but from the fair average of serious Christians; but he has taken it from the lowest specimen of what he has seen, and even more commonly from the distorted report of others. He was looking out for absurdity, and where it is studiously sought, it will not be difficult to find; and, if not found, it will be easily imagined. This caricature he produces as the representative of the whole body; taking care, however, to preserve in his portrait just resemblance enough to show a feature or two of the real face, that the disgusting and exaggerated physiognomy may not prevent its being recognized. If no glimpse of likeness could be traced, it would not answer the end; it would answer it still less, if the prevailing character of the piece were not deformity.

Candidus is persuaded that, of every combination of wickedness with folly which Satan has devised, hypocrisy is the greatest, as being the most generally unprofitable. The hypocrite is sure of being the abhorrence of both sides of the question. Where his duplicity is not suspected, the world hates him for the *appearance* of piety; God, who knows the heart, hates him for the abuse and affectation of it. But, though Candidus deprecates hypocrisy, he is cautious of suspecting it on light grounds, still more of charging it home without proof. As he is not omniscient, he cannot be quite sure that any man who appears more than usually pious *is* a hypocrite, nor does he so denominate him on that single ground. As he cannot scrutinize his heart, he judges him by his actions, and leaves him to settle his motive with his Maker.

On the whole, if he meet with a man, the consistency of whose life gives stronger evidence of the reality and depth of his religion, than other men, he is reluctant in suspecting him either of hypocrisy or enthusiasm. So far from it, he will find his own faith strengthened, his own victory over the world confirmed, his own indifference to human applause increased, by

such a living exemplification of the truth of Christianity, and calmly leave it to the inconsiderate, the incompetent, and the malevolent, to stigmatize the character which he reveres.

They who, when they observe eminent piety and zeal much above low water-mark, insinuate that such symptoms in the more animated Christian prove his tendency to be a separatist, pay a very wretched compliment to the established church. Is it not implying, that her service is not sufficiently high and enlarged to satisfy an energetic spirit; that she does not possess attractions to engage, and materials to fill, and spirit to warm a devout mind, but that a superior degree of earnestness will be in danger of driving its possessor to stray without her pale in search of richer pastures? Is it not virtually saying one of two things, either that a fervent piety is bad, or that the church is not good.

With Candidus, this is so far from being the case, he is so little 'given to change,' that he rejoices in belonging to a church of whose formularies we have already seen how much he had to say in commendation. In these standards he rejoices to see truth, as it were, pinned down, hedged in, and as far as is possible, in this mutable world, preserved and perpetuated. Her significant and spiritual ordinances, and the large infusion of Scripture in her offices and Liturgy, secure her from the fluctuations of human opinion; so that, if ever the principles of any of her ministers should degenerate, her service would be protected from the vicissitude. No sentiments but those of her prescribed ritual can ever find their way into the desk, and the desk will always be a safe and permanent standard for the pulpit itself, as well as a test by which others may ascertain its purity.

He values her government for the same reason for which he values her Liturgy, because it gives a definite bound to the inclosure, never forgetting that the fruit inclosed is of deeper importance than the fence which incloses. He always remembers, however, that, at no very remote period, when the hedge was broken down, disorder and misrule overspread the fair vineyard.

Among other doctrines, he is an accurate studier of the doctrine of proportions, in whatever regards the ecclesiastical institution. Though he cordially approves her form and discipline, though he believes they are not only essential to her dignity, but necessary to her existence, yet he discriminates between what is subordinate and what is supreme. If the one is the body, the other is the soul. It is to her strenuously maintaining the doctrines of the New Testament, that he looks for her preservation. This is her Palladium. Nor does it more resemble the fabled statue of Ilium, because, like that, it fell from heaven to earth, than in its having dropped down *while the Prince was building the citadel.*

If he adopt the Liturgy for his model, it is because he perceives how completely she has adopted the Bible for hers, in never giving undue prominence to one doctrine to the disparagement of the rest; like *her* he appreciates and settles them according to their due degrees of importance.

Among his many reasons for venerating the church of England, the principal is that she is an integral and distinguished portion of the Church of Christ. In the specific he never loses sight of the generick character; as a Churchman, he is first a Christian and a Protestant. The ramification, so far from separating him from the root, unites him more closely to it. If he bear much fruit, it is because he is inserted into the true vine. Though quicksighted to what he conceives to be the errors, he does liberal justice to whatever is valuable in other communities. In many members of those which differ from his own, more in forms of government than in any of the essentials of doctrine, he sees powerful ability and sound learning to admire, and much substantial piety to venerate. Even with regard to that church, from the corruptions and spiritual tyranny of which our own has been providentially rescued, he acknowledges much excellence in those missals from which our own ritual was partly extracted; he sees in many of her writers a genius, a sublimity, and an unction that rarely have been surpassed. In short, he exercises charity and kindness to all sects and all parties, except one, a sect which has lately been well animadverted on. It is not, indeed, a distinct sect; it is not a separate community, for then his prudence might escape all contact with it, but it is one, whose sloth, producing the same insinuating effect which the subtlety of the Jesuits formerly produced, without giving us, like the school Loyola, any hope of its extinction, has found means to thrust not a few of its followers into every religious denomination and society in the world—the sect of the *non-doers.*

In these worst of sectaries, no vaunting profession of faith, no flaming display of orthodoxy, no clamour for favourite, no hostility against reprobated doctrines, no outcry for or against the church or the state, will ever raise them in his estimation. He accounts them the barren fig-tree of every community in whose soil they spring up. They may, indeed, claim to belong to it, but it is as the worm belongs to the root, the canker to the bud, tho excrescence to the healthful body.

In the constitution of the established church Candidus approves the degrees of rank and dignity, and the gradations of income. But, if he never entertains a desire that the highest were lower, he cannot help breathing a cordial wish that the lowest were higher. Convinced, however, that every thing human is in its very nature imperfect, he consoles himself with the hope, a hope which is confirmed by actual instances, that some of the most highly endowed will be examples of christian liberality, and some of the most lowly, of patient submission; so that their several portions may, while they enable them to furnish a pattern to others, minister to their own eternal good.

But evils which he cannot remove, he will never aggravate. He holds it criminal even to agitate questions which only fester and inflame the wounds they are meant to cure; he knows that fruitless discussion may irritate, but seldom heals; that querelous animadversions on irremediable grievances only serve

by stirring up discontent, to excite insubordination.

He respects every order and degree among them for the Lord's sake; and, if a case should occur in which he cannot honour the man, he will honour his office. If called on for his opinion as to any defect, his censures are discreet; if not called upon, he is silent. But if his censures, when just, are temperate; his commendations, when merited, are cordial. Above all, he holds the practice to be equally dishonest, disingenuous and vulgar, to make communities and bodies answerable for the faults and errors of individuals; while he never commends or vindicates any thing decidedly wrong, either in individuals or in communities.

CHAP. XXVI.

The established Christian.

We have it on the authority of a fine writer, that, *not to know what occurred before we were born, is to be always a child.* Yet while the intellect may be improved to the highest pitch by this antecedent knowledge, the will and the passions may, notwithstanding our study of the most elaborate discussions on their nature and effects, remain in the same state of childish imbecility. History and philosophy, though they inform the understanding, and assist the judgment, cannot rectify the obliquities of the heart.

The experience of all past ages has produced such an accumulated mass of disappointment, such a long unbroken series of mortification, such a reiterated conviction of the emptiness of this world, and of the insufficiency of its power to confer happiness, that one would be ready to imagine, that to every fresh generation, nay to every period of the life of every individual in every generation, wisdom would not have all her admonitions to begin over again. One would not think that the same truths require, not only to be afresh pressed upon us, but to be again unfolded; to be repeated as if all previous experiment had never been tried, as if all foregoing admonition had either never been given, or had been completely obliterated; as if the world were about to begin on a fresh stock of materials, to set out on an untried set of principles, as if it were about to enter on an original course of action of which preceding ages had left no precedent; on a line of conduct of which our forefathers had bequeathed no instances of failure, had experienced no defeat of expectation.

We read perpetually of multitudes, who lived in the long indulgence of unbounded appetite, who in the gratification of every desire, has drained the world to its last dregs; but does the narrative of ages record a single instance, that the end proposed and followed up in the fervent pursuit, I mean happiness, was ever attained? We contemplate these recorded examples, we lament the disgusts, and pity the mortifications of the disappointed; but who applies the knowledge to any practical use, to any personal purpose We are informed, but we are not instructed. We resolve, in full confidence of our own wisdom, and complete contempt for that of our predecessors, to make the experiment for ourselves. We, too, pursue the same end, and probably by the same path; secure that we shall escape the mistakes into which others have fallen, assured that we shall avoid the evils which they have incurred, evils which we attribute to their ignorance, or their neglect, to their error, or their indiscretion.

We set out fresh adventurers in the old tract. We weary our wits, we waste our fortune, we exhaust our spirits. Still we are persuaded that *we* have devised the expedient of which our precursors were ignorant; that *we* have hit on the very discovery which had eluded their search; that *we* have found the ingredient, which they, in mixing up the grand compound, earthly happiness, had overlooked.

The natural and pressing object of our desire is present enjoyment; those, therefore, who gratify our wayward fancies, or remove from us any immediate inconvenience, are sure of our favour. On them we seize as instruments for promoting our schemes of gratification, forgetting that they have schemes of their own to promote; that they are equally looking to us for our instrumentality; and that, if they are making any undue sacrifices to us, it is but in order to the furtherance of those schemes. Such is mere worldly friendship. As the intellectual eye seldom runs along the whole train of consequences, which is the only true way of taking our measure of things, the same principle which attaches us to the friend who is humouring us, makes us murmur at the dispensations of Him who is correcting us, dispensations which, though painful at the moment, may, by a train of circumstances of which we know neither the design nor the process, be insuring to us future benefits. But having no clear perception of remote good, we have no very ardent desires after it. Our short sightedness concurs with our selfishness in making this false estimate.

Divine goodness, which we perhaps have hitherto withstood, at length when He who gives the grace gives the desire, touches the heart so long closed against it. The still small voice which was drowned in the noise and tumult of the world is at length heard, and, through longer forbearance, and farther communications of that grace, is at length obeyed. Religion operating on the convictions of the heart, and our humility improving with the experience of our own mistakes, gradually remove the veil through which we had hitherto beheld the world.

As the heavenly light grows stronger, the false lights, drawn from the exhalations of sensuality and self-indulgence, which at once glimmer and mislead, are quenched. The day-star begins to dawn. In the clearer atmosphere, objects assume their proper shape; every thing appears in its true colours. The mind is insensibly disenchanted, the views take another turn. As the eye attains a more distinct sight, the desires acquire a juster aim. We discover that the best things on earth have an inseparable imperfection appended to them. Referring to our past experience, or present clearer observation of things, we find that the delights which we

fancied were indefectible are dying away; we find that pleasure dissolves, wit misleads, riches corrupt, power intoxicates, hope deceives, possession disappoints;—and, which now stamps upon our renewed feelings the deepest impression of the vanity of human things, difficulties sink our spirits, success agitates them; we find that what we want, we desire with a painful ardency; what we have, we either fear to enjoy, or the enjoyment is poisoned by the fear of losing it; and tho intense delight could not long be borne, even if it could be obtained. The convictions of the Christian being settled, he is now desirous of imparting the benefits of his own experience to his younger friends, who, in their turn, commonly reject the transfer, thinking him to be as much mistaken as he had formerly thought his predecessors; like him, they prefer the experiment to the advice, the risk to the caution.

The sober thinker is now convinced, that between the fever of desire, the uncertainty of attainment, the disappointment attending what is attained, the alternation of hope and fear, the dread of the worst things, and the insuppressible sense of the brevity of the best, the mere man of the world can never be substantially happy. The Christian thus warned, thus wakened, is thankful, not for the mistakes he has committed, but for the salutary vexations that have attended them. The monitory wisdom of past ages rises in his esteem, in the same proportion as his own sinks. Above all, he has found, that there is no infallible wisdom but in the oracles of inspiration; there he looks for whatever is 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' There only he has found, that the 'man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

In perusing the sacred records, he even derives consolation from what he has been a source of derision to the profane, and of wonder to the ignorant—the fidelity with which the inspired writers have exhibited holy men, in the most censurable instances of their conduct, and in the lowest stages of their hope and confidence. He there beholds the chosen servants of God wading through doubts and apprehensions, assaulted by temptations, perplexed by trials. Had they never been presented but in their happier seasons, but in their triumphs, and their victories, the comparison with his own failures, with his own occasional depressions and fluctuations, would have sunk his spirits which they now support, would have weakened his faith which they now confirm.

He rejoices in the Gospel as a stream flowing from the fountain of love and mercy, the spring of all spiritual life and motion; he finds that genuine Christianity differs from every other good, as spirit differs from matter. It establishes the foundation of happiness as well as goodness; and both, not on any supposed merit in the recipient, but on the free mercy and voluntary grace of God. While it exacts obedience to the divine law, it shows that the requisition cannot be complied with, but by divine assistance; what it commands, it bestows; if it requires the will, it confers the power.

In the retrospect of his past life, he is astonished at the patience and forbearance of God under his own repeated provocations; especially he reflects with wonder, that the very prosperity which had been the special gift of his Maker, had alienated his heart from him. He is humbled to think, that it was in the very arms of his goodness he forgot him; when he tasted most abundantly of his bounty, then it was he neglected him most; when he most largely enjoyed his overflowing beneficence, the gift induced not gratitude, but intoxication. He looks back with remorse on the time he has wasted, and the errors he has committed, but he does not spend his remaining strength so much in regretting as in repairing them.

To be enchanted with things which have not much in them, he now finds is the mark of a weak and undistinguished mind. It shows the absence of a rational understanding, and the want of a manly spirit, to be inordinately attached to any object, whose worth will not bear out our judgment, and vindicate our attachment. Habitual considerations on the littleness of present things, the disappointing nature of all earthly enjoyments, the grandeur of his future prospects, with nearer views of the eternal world, all combine to give continence to his mind, moderation to his desires, and sobriety to his conduct.

We are slow in making the discovery of the large capacity of the human mind; that it is made capable of a felicity commensurate to its nature; that the rudiments, both of eternal misery and happiness, are laid in our souls here. Being endued with such faculties and powers for seeking the favour of God, and such means and graces for attaining to his presence, the Christian finds that the misery must be proportionate in missing it. He has also learned, that it is not the design of the Gospel merely to announce to us a state of future blessedness, but to fit us for it. It is but half of the work of infinite love to provide a heaven for man; it is its completion to make man a suitable recipient of the bliss prepared for him. Without this gracious provision, Christianity had been a scheme to tantalize, and not to save us. He sees that there is a higher destination for the passions than that to which he has hitherto applied them. Those affections which had been parcelled out, and severally fastened on their respective vanities, are now concentrated and devoted to God. Love, joy, hope, desire, the very propensities which have formerly misled him, having found their true object, now ripen him for that state from which they had so long seduced him; each contributes its quota towards framing him into a disposition for happiness, and to prepare him for its ultimate enjoyment.

He has long since discovered that the best pleasures of earth are drawn from cisterns not fountains, that our most prized delights are neither pure in themselves, nor permanent in their duration. The immortal mind cannot be satisfied in the pursuit, nor even in the enjoyment. They cannot confer what they do not possess, perfection and stability. Things perishable themselves cannot satisfy the desires of being made for eternity. The soul cannot exert its full powers, nor unfold its whole nature, nor dis-

play all its operations on this contracted stage. The bed is narrower than that a man can stretch himself on it.' There is no proportion between such a scanty space and such large capabilities, such trivial pleasures and such boundless desires, such a fleeting duration and a spirit formed for immortality.

He has found that it is of pressing necessity that this futurity be a happy one, otherwise the very circumstance that it is endless, which makes the happiness complete, turns against us, and makes the consummation of our misery. It is difficult to say whether the shortness of the time allotted us to secure this futurity, or the eternity of the state to be secured, should most stimulate our religious exertions. We have frequently spoken of the duty of learning of an enemy, here the lesson is peculiarly awakening. The reason assigned in the vision of St. John why the *great* enemy is working with such powerful energy, is, because *the time is short*. Shall we be equally assured of the brevity of our own time, and yet be less active in securing our salvation, than he is in promoting our destruction.

The boundlessness of the divine perfections presents to the soul the widest range for the exercise of faith and love, and the Gospel teaches the most unshaken confidence of happiness in the death of Christ. But that God is the King *eternal and immortal*, is to us the broad basis on which all the rest of the promises are built. It would moderate the delight with which we consider his attributes, if eternity were not annexed to them; his immortality alone being the pledge and security of ours. 'The weight of glory' announced by the Apostle derives its highest value from its being an *eternal* weight.

Of the joys of heaven there is in Scripture no description. This is wisely avoided, as the tastes, desires, and inclinations of men are so different, one conceiving that to be of the very essence of happiness, for which another has little relish. They are intimated by negatives, or by shadows, figures, and images of things, to which a general idea of enjoyment is annexed. There is only one idea respecting heaven, which is clear, and plain, and definite—its *eternity*. Of duration every man has some precision in his ideas. Other delineations might have led to dispute; but if the different notions of the nature of happiness might have kindled debate; about its immortality, there can be but one opinion. Perpetuity gives the finishing stamp to perfection.

And as we frame our ideas of eternity from what we know of duration; so we frame our faint notions of God from what we conceive of goodness. We meditate on the excellences of the highest created spirits, and then imagine something of God, though inconceivably elevated above that poor conception, yet not contradictory to it. We fill our mind with the idea of wisdom, goodness, knowledge, power, holiness, justice, purity, and to each of these attributes we prefix that of infinite; never forgetting that God is almost as much above our excellences as our weaknesses. Yet we can but ascribe to Him all that we feel or can imagine of perfection, and we should be still more lost in the mere abstract notion, if we had not some sensible feelings, though infinitely imperfect, derived from reality and exemplification.

The Christian must fill his vocation to the last. In this or that profession men are looking forward to the period when they may lay it down with safety and honour: the Christian's safety and honour consist in his carrying it on to the end. But there is between them this point of agreement. The man of business contracts his schemes, diminishes his labours, mitigates his activity, all with a view to his ultimate repose. If the religious man act thus, he does it with another view, and to a higher end. If he seek rest from his toils, it is in order to find a surer rest in God; if he contract his schemes, it is that he may enlarge his views. There is no specific period in which he can say, My work is done, till he lies down in the grave, where no man can work. He now finds that the tranquillity of his occupations, the beauties of nature, the peaceful pleasures of retirement, pleasures the most natural and congenial to the mind of unsophisticated man, would still be too little to fill his desires; that they would leave a melancholy void in his heart, without the sense of *His* presence whose gift they are. While a consciousness both of the presence and favour of God gives a relish to every enjoyment, and heightens even common comforts into blessings.

There is a progression in the habits of a Christian. In the advancement of his course his pursuits are probably slower, but his interruptions are fewer. If his progress be even less obvious, less apparently active, he is perhaps more substantially improving, more spiritually advancing. When, from the infirmities of declining life, he may seem to be doing nothing, he may then be doing most. If he is able to look less abroad, he is looking more within. He begins to taste more of the fruits of that victory which the Apostle describes as the evidence of a renovated heart; to give this best proof that he is 'born of God,' 'he overcometh the world.' This, if one of his latest, is one of his most important conquests. But though he has turned away his eyes from the world, because it never satisfied the desires of his heart, he endeavours to the last to serve it with much more sedulity, than when he looked to it for happiness.

He has long been persuaded, that even in this present low state of being, we must attain something of the rudiments of future happiness. He has learned that the first principles must be formed now, which are to have their consummation in heaven. To look forward to the completion of a state and character, of which we have not so much as begun to acquire the elements, is not acting according to any of the analogies of common life. The beginning and the process of any thing we have in contemplation always partake in an inferior, but still in a similar and progressive measure, of the nature of the end. It has the same properties and tendencies, in its initial state, with that which is hereafter to be completed. We must begin to lay in our hearts the foundation both of the love and knowledge of God, if we would hereafter attain to that perfection in both, which

we are told is of the essence of the heavenly happiness.

He has long found that there is no peace to the mind that does not entertain some one ultimate end. Broken views and mixed designs distract its attention, and corrode its quiet. In most of the enterprises of life, a man, besides being absorbed by present and perhaps opposing schemes, is looking anxiously forward to some point of change. He had no sooner framed one project, but his views are penetrating to something beyond it; something which he shall have adopted as soon as he shall have accomplished all his proximate objects. Thus the projecting, and fluctuating, and prospective mind, is never at rest. There is no stability but in God. No grand aim, no fixed position, no ultimate end, but in him. He who has once chosen his Redeemer for his portion, is subject to no more vicissitudes; has no after reference, no remoter pursuit, no further design, in reserve.

He, however, who makes heaven his aim, and God his end, will not therefore live idly, as if his choice being decided, his object being settled, he had nothing more to do. His object is indeed fixed, his choice is irreversibly determined, his portion is unalterably decided; but that which elevates his desires also enlarges his capacities, so that his pursuit never ceases, his search is never finished; nor ever can be, unless the perfection of its object could be exhausted. Mr. Boyle observes of a certain mineral, that a man may consume his whole life in the study of it, without ever arriving at the knowledge of all its properties. How much more shall he who seeks to 'acquaint himself with God, find that his entire life is too short, his whole powers too small, to find out the Almighty to perfection! This he will never completely accomplish on earth, yet his desires will grow with his attainments.

But as the happiness of a Christian is chiefly in prospect, he joyfully looks forward to its glorious consummation in a better world. 'When I awake up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied,' a plain intimation that till then we shall not be satisfied. From different passages of scripture, we collect that the happiness of Heaven consists in seeing God, in participating his likeness, in being satisfied with it. But how shall this blessedness be perfected hereafter, if the desire, if the endeavour, does not originate here? If there be no preliminary acquaintance begun with him who ransomed us with his blood, can we expect to dwell with him in eternal glory? 'Not to know God' is the portentous omen of being 'punished with everlasting destruction from his presence.' It is unspeakably distressing to apprehend, that this may possibly be the awful description of some, who are by no means destitute of credit or character; who go on without ever entertaining a conception, that such a beginning may be connected with such an end.

All the delineations of future misery, all the pictures of a disturbed imagination, all the terrors with which a restless conscience anticipates its torments, all the accumulated images, by which Revelation describes it, whether under the figure of the fire that is never quenched, or the worm that never dies, are but inferior degrees of this terrible climax, 'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord!' All the doleful conceptions of unimaginable woe, all the shades and shapes of substantial, unutterable wretchedness, are comprised in this hopeless, everduring exile. What the soul suffers, there is no attempt to describe, what it loses is but faintly presented to the imagination. On the other hand, 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived,' the final state of bliss. And it is observable that the two extremes are both most emphatically conveyed by negatives. We are only assured that assimilation with God is the perfection of joy, banishment from his presence the extremity of woe.

There is nothing that more humbles and abases the established Christian, than that, whilst in his happier moments, he is able to figure to himself a cheering image of the glory of the Redeemer, the blessedness of the redeemed, the beauty of Christian perfection; to feel himself not only awakened, but exalted, not merely enlightened, but kindled, almost possessing, rather than anticipating, heaven; while he is enabled, in a joyful measure, to meditate upon these things, feel his mind ennobled and his soul expanded by the contemplation, yet to find how soon the bright ideas fade, the strong impression is effaced, the heavenly vision vanished; he mourns to reflect, that he does not more powerfully exhibit in his conversation, more forcibly display in his life, that spirit of which his heart was lately so full, of which his mind was so enamoured. Cast down by these reflections, he still learns—painful lesson!—that 'those *must* sow in tears who would reap in joy;' that it is not expectation, but possession, which excludes all sense of sorrow; that it is heaven itself, and not the promise of it, that is to 'wipe all tears from our eyes.' His happiness in this life will, on these accounts, be as far below perfection, as his goodness; and when we speak of his joy and felicity, it must be understood, rather of a comparative, than an absolute happiness. It is the joy of hope rendered sure by faith. The soul will not be completely blessed till the body is disanimated, its temptations removed, and its infirmities at an end.

The Christian, as life wears away, must not be discouraged, if he feels not always those fervours, which once appeared to him inseparable from real piety. It is not, perhaps, that his piety is less sincere, but that years and infirmity, which have impaired his natural energy of character, may affect or seem to affect the liveliness of his devotion; but it may be mellowed, without being decayed; he will not too much distress himself by mistaking that for a diminution of grace, which may be only a wearing out of nature. Or it may be, that the principle, which is become habitual, may not for that very reason strike the mind so forcibly as on its more early adoption, yet it may have sunk deeper into his heart. There may be more *proportion* in his religion; all its component parts may be more balanced: there is more evenness in his character; more virtues, but of a less ostensible kind, are collected into

it than he formerly thought necessary. His piety is at once more solid, and more spiritual, more operative, yet more serene. His principles have somewhat of a different call for their exercise: the efforts he formerly made to resist temptations of a bolder character, are now exerted to repel the incursions of peevishness, the allurements of indolence, the murmurs of impatience. Qualities which he once relinquished to the unconverted, as thinking them merely natural, he now carefully cherishes. Cheerfulness, once considered as the mere flow of animal spirits is cultivated as a Christian grace; for it does not now spring from nature, but triumphs over it.

He is not so eager in support of some particular opinions as formerly, because each doctrine now maintains its proper place and due importance in his mind. If he make religion less a subject of discussion, he trusts it is become a more practical principle. His views are more deep, his judgment more just, his convictions more firmly rooted. There is a finer edge to his virtues, for they are now sheathed in humility; and this quality, the crowning point, and soundest evidence of a renovated mind, by rendering him more distrustful of himself, more candid in his opinions, and more temperate in his language, will have checked that forwardness of debate, rashness of decision and impatience with error, which, with the less enlightened, might formerly have given him the appearance of a more animated Christian.

But the more his character improves, the more he looks out of himself for his final happiness. His trust in his Redeemer, increases in exact proportion to those virtues of which that trust is the source, virtues on which too many others invite him to rest his dependence.

Some Christians, in their outset, are disposed to lay an almost exclusive stress on duties, without sufficiently cultivating the spirit which should prompt them; others too much overlook duties, relying on certain fervors for supplying their place. The established Christian is careful never to relax in duties, even though they are not attended with that energy which once gave more animation to the exercise. There may be in them a less sensible acting of the affections, which are naturally more alive in the active season of life, yet without any diminution of the real principle of piety; there will be rather an increased devotedness, an augmented acquiescence of the will, a more complete consecration of heart and spirit, to the only legitimate object of their entire affection.

He will, however, be solicitous, that if the flame emit not such vivid flashes, as when it was first lighted, yet that it shall burn more steadily, more equably; especially will he be vigilant, that he do not insensibly transfer to other objects that ardour which used to give life and spirit to his piety, and that while he fears he is not so much alive to God, it is because he is more alive to the world. Though others cannot fairly judge of his internal state, yet there is this sure test by which he will judge himself; if the natural tempers be not more subdued, if the irrascible passions retain their vehemence, if pride and selfishness maintain their sway, while the religious feelings alone are grown obtuse, it is an alarming symptom, a plain intimation, that religion has indeed lost, or rather, it is to be feared, that it never had obtained the supreme place in his heart.

And as he has observed, that in some vehement characters the lamp of religious fervour was first kindled by the fire of natural passions, so its flame declines with the declension of the natural powers; he is also aware, that there is a possibility to the Christian, as he advances in years, of a growing supineness, the too natural effect of which is a decay of the vital spirit of religion. This makes him tremble when he reflects that the same awful warning which, in the vision of the Apocalypse, 'the Spirit gives to the churches,' is addressed with equal emphasis to every individual Christian. He remembers that this compassionate Spirit, which succours us when tempted, strengthens us when persecuted, intercedes for us when afflicted, has promised no such soothing tenderness under declining piety. His language to the decaying Christian, as well as to the lukewarm church, is that of alarming menace. This gradual apostacy is the only case, because it is a hopeless one, in which he threatens final rejection. It is, indeed, infinitely grievous, when they, whom this blessed Spirit has enlightened, in whom he has excited devout dispositions and holy tempers, visibly sink below the state in which they once stood. In the volume of inspiration, every complaint, every expostulation, every argument which long-suffering goodness could suggest, every intreaty which insulted mercy could devise, is exhausted; nothing is omitted which can invigorate relaxing principle, nothing is neglected which can reanimate decaying piety.

The advanced Christian, therefore, will guard against the too natural delusion of imposing on himself the belief, that a declension in spiritual vigour is only natural decay. But he will guard against it, by watching its sensible and visible effects. He will discern, whether he sets less value on the things which are passing away; whether his attachment to the world diminishes, while his prayers for its prosperity and improvement increase; whether he is as zealous in promoting good works by his purse and his influence, as he was in the days of health and strength, by his personal exertions.

The confirmed Christian exemplifies the emphatical description of the good man in Scripture, 'he *walks* with God.' He does not merely approach him at stated times; he does not ceremoniously address him on great occasions only, and then retreat, and dwell at a distance; but he *walks* with him, his habitual intercourse, his natural motion, his daily converse, his intimate communication, is with his Redeemer: and he remembers that walking not only implies intercourse, but progress. His graces if not more sincere, are more universal; he knows and he endeavours to act upon the knowledge, that a Christian must be holy in '*all manner* of conversation;' that excellences in some part of his character will not atone for allowed defects in any.

In the still remaining varieties of this changing scene, not knowing to what particular trials

he may yet be called, he will have endeavoured to bring a general preparedness of spirit to every event. When he can no longer *do* the will of God by his accustomed exertions, he can, with a submission which is worn into a habit, *suffer* it. That which is the crime of an ordinary man, is his highest attainment. *He can submit to be useless.* He will cheerfully resign himself to be discharged from services, in which his former happiness had consisted. He will contentedly see himself laid by, though still stout in heart, and firm in spirit. He will kindly assist those who are rising up to fill the place which he is about to leave vacant, by his counsel his experience, his prayers. He can rejoice, that though the servant fails, the service is and will be supplied.

He will continue more assiduously to labour after that consistency of character, which is a more unequivocal evidence of high christian attainment, than the most prominent great qualities, which are frequently counteracted by their opposites. This consistency exhibits a most striking conformity to the image of his Maker; as in the works of creation, the wisdom of the Supreme Intelligence is more admirable in the agreement and harmony of one thing with another, than in the individual beauty and excellence of each. It is more conspicuous, in the fitness and proportion of its parts relatively, than in the composition of the parts themselves. By this uniformity, the results of religion are the most beautifully exhibited in the christian character.

And as a real Christian is, allowing for human infirmity, consistent with himself; so the same consistency is discoverable in the general features of all Christians. However men may differ in their natural character, yet there is, in all true believers, a sort of correspondent feeling, as well as common principle, which draws their affections to each other, as well as their hearts and faculties to one common source and centre. It is not a traditionary religion which attracts them to the faith of their ancestors, nor is it a party feeling which attaches them to some particular society, but it is a divinely infused principle, communicated by the Spirit of God; it is identified in all its essentials; and a genuine Christian is radically the same being, wherever he is found, and under whatever difference of circumstances he exists.

The nearer he approaches to God, the more, in one sense, he will be sensible of his distance from him. Higher views of God's unspeakable holiness, a deeper sense of his own unworthiness, act reciprocally, and confirm each other. Yet this growing consciousness of his distance only serves to augment his love. He more and more feels the goodness of God, in having never cast off human nature, in having, immediately on its apostacy, conceived the gracious design to repair its evils, and restore its dignity. He feels, in its full force, that unspeakable consolation which the disciples of the most sublime of all the pagan philosophers lamented was wanting in their religion; they regretted that *between the pure divinity and the impure creature, as there is no union, so there can be no communion.* Can any thing more strikingly demonstrate how completely the Mediator provides for that want, and establishes that communion? 'It is thus,' as a very learned and pious writer has observed, 'that the Gospel doctrine gives full relief of mind and ease of conscience, as well as encouragement to piety, and discouragement to sin.'* It gives not only future hope, but present peace! it is not all in promise, it is much in hand.

Through the silent, but effectual, operations of grace, obedience, is become acquiescence, duty, is transformed, not only into assent, but choice. If even a heathen could say, Lead me to whatsoever I am appointed, and I will *follow thee, but if I am unwilling, still I will follow thee,* no wonder if the confirmed Christian serves God not so much because he is bound to serve him, as because love is the dictate of his heart, affection the voluntary bent of his disposition. He needs no extraneous attraction, the impulse is from within. The raw recruit requires to be allured by the 'fife and spirit-stirring drum,' but the veteran soldier follows the service because he loves it, follows it for its own sake. There is no longer any violence done to nature, for the nature is made conformable to the object; the love of Christ constrains him, contrary principles are reconciled, opposite propensities are blended into one, and that one a blessed, though still imperfect, conformity to the image and the will of God. The more his perceptions are cleared and his will purified, the more his faith strengthens; the more simple his views become, the more his thoughts and affections reduce themselves to that one central point, where alone perfection resides.

As he has long observed that the scheme, the show, the fashion of this life passes away, so he does not forget, that his own progress keeps pace with the world, that he also is passing away with it. Fluctuation, vicissitude and decay, form the very characters of our being. 'Nothing continueth in one stay.' Surely these perpetual intimations of Scripture were intended for a constant memento, that fondness for things so transitory is as ill-suited to their value as disproportioned to their duration. These constant admonitions inculcate temperance in our joy, and moderation in our sorrow. They teach us to rejoice as if we rejoiced not, and to weep as if we wept not. Whatever is vain in the end, renders all reference to its intermediate course comparatively vain also.

The Christian observes the world around him to be most careful about the things which will end at death; his care is chiefly confined to the things which then begin; and as it is not so much to ascertain the time, as to secure the consequences of death, that he has been anxious; death can never properly be said to be sudden to him, who always knew that the event was as certain as the period was uncertain. But he does not convert the shadows of death into such a thick and substantial cloud, as shall prevent the mental eye from piercing through it, and seeing the glory beyond it. Through this deep, but pervious gloom, the bright prospect opens to that state, a glimpse of which, caught by the eye of faith, has in all ages, enabled the sincere

* John Smith.

Christian to work through all his earthly difficulties: as it has strengthened him to encounter, with holy hope and humble confidence, the trials of life, so he trusts it will sustain him in his last conflict with the terrors of death. 'Let me now,' says he, 'act as seeing him who is invisible, borne up by the promises of the Gospel, and strengthened by the eternal Spirit, let me anticipate my heaven, burst my present narrow bounds, shake off the incumbrance of body, annihilate a distance in itself so short, and make that immortality which is near, present.'

Thus is the image of divine goodness more clearly though still imperfectly, reflected in the confirmed Christian. The original character of the human heart, as it came from the hands of its Creator, is about to be reinstated in its pristine purity. Sin, the lawless tenant, not the native proprietor of the mansion, will soon be totally expelled; in the mean time, the primitive principle is radicated; the usurper is dethroned, if not altogether dispossessed; he is conquered, if not absolutely expelled; if he sometimes disturb, he can no longer destroy. The exile returns to his forsaken home, the prodigal to his father's house, the pardoned penitent to his God.

AN ESSAY

ON THE CHARACTER AND PRACTICAL WRITINGS OF

SAINT PAUL.

Saint Paul hath furnished us with so rich a variety of moral and spiritual precepts, subordinate to the general laws of piety and virtue, that out of them might well be compiled a body of Ethics, or system of precepts *de officiis*, in truth and completeness far excelling those which any philosophy hath been able to devise or deliver.—Dr. Barrow.

PREFACE.

It is with no little diffidence that the writer of the following pages ventures to submit them to the public eye. She comes 'in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.' She is fully aware, that whoever pretends to institute an inquiry into the character, and especially into the writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in a manner at all adequate to the dignity and excellence of both, should possess many and high requisites, to which she can make out no fair title. It would, however, be entirely superfluous to insist on her incompetency to the proper execution of such a work, on her deficiencies in ancient learning, Biblical criticism, and deep theological knowledge; because the sagacity of the reader would not fail to be beforehand with her avowal, in detecting them. It may, however, serve as some apology for the boldness of the present undertaking, that these volumes are not of a critical, but of a practical nature.

On the doctrinal portion, more especially, of Saint Paul's Epistles, such a multitude of admirable discourses have been composed, that to have attempted to add to their number, without reaching their excellence, would have been as unnecessary as it might have been presumptuous. On the practical part, also, much has been ably and usefully written. Dissertations, commentaries, treatises, and sermons, however, though of superior merit, have not worn out the subject; and elucidations of his writings, whether they relate to doctrine or to practice, cannot, in any point of view, be undertaken without exhibiting new proofs of those inestimable treasures they contain. They are a golden mine, in which the diligent workman, the deeper he digs, the more he will discover; the farther he examines, the more he will find. Rich veins, hitherto unheeded, will overpay his labours, will continue to pour out upon him their fresh abundance of precious ore. Even the present explorer, who had no skill to penetrate his depths, has been sometimes surprised at the opulence which lay upon the surface, and of which she had not before, perhaps, fully estimated the value.

There are, it is true, passages in the works of this great Apostle, (but they are of rare occurrence, and bear no proportion to such as are obvious,) which have been interpreted in a different and even contradictory manner by men, who, agreeing in the grand essentials of Christianity, may be allowed to differ on a few abstruse points, without any impeachment of the piety on either side. If one must be mistaken, both may be sincere. If either be wrong, both doubtless desire to be right; and, happily for mankind, we shall all be ultimately tried by a Judge, who is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the *heart;* in whose sight the reciprocal exercise of Christian charity may be more acceptable than that entire uniformity of sentiment which would supersede the occasion of its exercise. 'What I know not, teach Thou me,' is a petition which even the wisest are not too wise to offer; and they who have prefered it with the most effect, are, of all others, the persons who will judge the most tenderly of the different views, or unintentional misconceptions of the opposite party.

That conquest in debate over a Christian adversary, which is achieved at the expense of the Christian temper, will always be dearly purchased; and, though a triumph so obtained may discomfit the opponent, it will afford no moral triumph to the conqueror.

Waving, therefore, both from disinclination, and inability, whatever passages may be consider

ed as controversial, the writer has confined herself to endeavour, though it must be confessed, imperfectly and superficially, to bring forward St. Paul's character as a model for our general imitation, and his practical writings as a store-house for our general instruction; avoiding whatever might be considered as a ground for the discussion of any point not immediately tending to practical utility.

It may be objected to her plan, that it is not reasonable to propose for general imitation, a character so highly gifted, so peculiarly circumstanced,—an inspired Apostle,—a devoted Martyr. But it is the principal design of these pages,—a design which it may be thought is too frequently avowed in them,—to show that our common actions are to be performed, and our common trials sustained, in somewhat of the same spirit and temper with those high duties and those unparalleled sufferings to which Saint Paul was called out; and that every Christian in his measure and degree, should exhibit somewhat of the dispositions inculcated by that religion, of which the Apostle Paul was the brightest human example, as well as the most illustrious human teacher.

The writer is persuaded, that many read the Epistles of Saint Paul with deep reverence for the station they hold in the Inspired Oracles, without considering that they are at the same time supremely excellent for their unequalled applicableness to life and manners; that many, while they highly respect the writer, think him too high for ordinary use. It has, therefore, been her particular object, in the present work, not indeed to diminish the dignity of the Apostle, but to diminish, in one senso, the distance at which we are apt to hold so exalted a model; to draw him into a more intimate connection with ourselves; to let him down, as it were, not to our level, but to our familiarity. To induce us to resort to him, not only on the great demands and trying occurrences of life, but to bring both the writings and the conduct of this distinguished Saint to mix with our common concerns; to incorporate the doctrines which he teaches, the principles which he exhibits, and the precepts which he enjoins, into our ordinary habits, into our every day practice; to consider him not only as the writer who has the most ably and successfully unfolded the sublime truths of our Divine religion, and as the instructor who has supplied us with the noblest system of the higher ethics, but who has even condescended to extend his code to the more minute exigences and relations of familiar life.

It will, perhaps, be objected to the writer of these pages, that she has shown too little method in her distribution of the parts of her subject, and too little system in her arrangement of the whole; that she has expatiated too largely on some points, passed over others too slightly, and left many unnoticed; that she has exhibited no history of the life, and observed no regular order in her reference to the actions of the Apostle. She can return no answer to these anticipated charges, but that, as she never aspired to the dignity of an expositor, so she never meant to enter into the details of the biographer.

Formed, as they are, upon the most extensive views of the nature of man, it is no wonder that the writings of St. Paul have been read with the same degree of interest, by Christians of every name, age, and nation. The principles they contain are, in good truth, absolute and universal: and whilst this circumstance renders them of general obligation, it enables us, even in the remotest generation, to judge of the skilfulness of his addresses to the understanding, and to feel the aptitude of his appeals to the heart.

To the candour of the reader,—a candour which, though perhaps she has too frequently tried, and too long solicited, she has, however, never yet failed to experience,—she commits this little work. If it should set one human being on the consideration of objects hitherto neglected, she will account that single circumstance, success;—nay, she will be reconciled even to failure, if that failure should stimulate some more enlightened mind, some more powerful pen, to supply, in a future work on the same subject, the deficiencies of which she has been guilty; to rectify the errors which she may have committed; to rescue the cause which she may have injured.

Barley-Wood, January 20, 1815.

AN ESSAY

ON THE CHARACTER AND PRACTICAL WRITINGS OF

SAINT PAUL.

CHAP. I.

Introductory remarks on the morality of Paganism, showing the necessity of the Christian Revelation.

The morality of a people necessarily partakes of the nature of their theology; and in proportion as it is founded on the knowledge of the true God, in such proportion it tends to improve the conduct of man. The meanest Christian believer has here an advantage over the most enlightened heathen philosopher; for what he knows of the nature of God, arising chiefly from what he knows of Christ, and entirely from what is revealed in Scripture, he gains from those divine sources more clear and distinct views of the Deity, than unassisted reason could ever attain; and of consequence, more correct ideas of what is required of himself, both with respect to God and man. His ideas may be mean in their expression, compared with the splendid language of the sages of antiquity; but the cause of the superiority of his conceptions is obvious.

While they 'go about to establish their own wisdom,' he submits to the wisdom of God, as he finds it in his word. What inadequate views must the wisest pagans, though 'they felt after him,' have entertained of Deity, who could at best only contemplate him in his attributes of power and beneficence, whilst their highest unassisted flights could never reach the remotest conception of that incomprehensible blessing, the union of his justice and his mercy in the redemption of the world by his Son—a blessing familiar and intelligible to the most illiterate Christian.

The religion of the heathens was so deplorably bad in its principle, that it is no wonder their practice was proportionably corrupt. 'Those just measures of right and wrong,' says Locke, 'which necessity had introduced, which the civil laws prescribed, or philosophy recommended *stood not on their true foundation.*' They served indeed to tie society together, and by these bands and ligaments promoted order and convenience: but there was no divine command to make them respected, and there will naturally be little reverence for a law, where the legislator is not reverenced, much less where he is not recognized. There will also be little obedience to a law without sanctions where neither penalty is feared, nor reward expected.

Previous to the establishment of Christianity, philosophy had attained to its utmost perfection, and had shown how low was its highest standard. It had completely betrayed its inability to effect a revolution in the minds of men. 'Human reason,' says the same great authority above quoted, 'never yet, from unquestionable principles or clear deductions, made out an entire body of the law of nature. If a collection could be made of all the moral precepts in the pagan world, many of which may be found in the Christian religion, that would not at all hinder, but that the world still stood as much in need of our Saviour, and of the morality he taught.' The law of the New Testament recommends itself to our regard by its excellence, and to our obedience by the authority of the Lawgiver. Christianity, therefore, presents not only the highest perfections, but the surest standard of morals.

In a multitude of the noble sentences and beautiful aphorisms of many of the heathen writers, there was indeed a strong tone of morality. But these fine sentiments, not flowing from any perennial source, had seldom any powerful effect on conduct. Our great poet has noticed this discordance between principle and practice in his dialogue between two great and virtuous Romans.—Cassius, who disbelieved a future state, reproves Brutus for the inconsistency between his desponding temper and the doctrines of his own Stoic school:

> You make no use of your philosophy,
> If you give way to accidental evils.

Many of their works, in almost every species of literature, exhibit such perfection as to stretch the capacity of the reader, while they kindle his admiration, and invest with no inconsiderable reputation, him who is able to seize their meaning, and to taste their beauties; so that an able critic of their writings almost ranks with him who excels in original composition. In like manner the lives of their great men abound in splendid sayings, as well as heroic virtues, to such a degree as to exalt our idea of the human intellect, and, in single instances, of the human character. We say, in single instances, for their idea of a perfect character wanted consistency, wanted completeness. It had many constituent parts, but there was no *whole* which comprised them. The moral fractions made up no integral. The virtuous man thought it no derogation from his virtue to be selfish, the conqueror to be revengeful, the philosopher to be arrogant, the injured to be unforgiving: forbearance was cowardice, humility was baseness, meekness was pusillanimity. Not only their justice was stained with cruelty, but the most cruel acts of injustice were the road to popularity which immortalized the perpetrator.—The good man was his own centre. Their virtues wanted to be drawn out of themselves, and this could not be the case. As their goodness did not arise from any knowledge, so it could not spring from any imitation of the Divine perfections. That inspiring principle, the love of God, the vital spark of all religion, was a motive of which they had not so much as heard; and if they had, it was a feeling which it would have been impossible for them to cherish, since some of the best of their deities were as bad as the worst of themselves.

When the history of their own religion contained little more than the quarrels and the intrigues of these deities, could we expect that the practice of the people would be much better, or more consistent than their belief? If the divinities were at once holy and profligate, shall we wonder if the adoration was at once devout and impure? The worshipper could not commit a crime but he might vindicate it by the example of some deity; he could not gratify a single appetite of which his religion did not furnish a justification.

Besides this, all their scattered documents of virtue could never make up a body of morals They wanted a connecting tie.—The doctrines of one school were at variance with those of another. Even if they could have clubbed their opinions and picked out the best from each sect, so as to have patched up a code, still the disciples of one sect would not have submitted to the leader of another; the system would have wanted a head, or the head would have wanted authority, and the code would have wanted sanctions.

And as there was no governing system, so there was no universal rule of morals, for morality was different in different places.—In some countries people thought it no more a crime to expose their own children than in others to adopt those of their neighbour.—The Persians were not looked upon as the worst moralists for marrying their mothers, nor the Hyrcanians for not marrying at all, nor the Sogdians for murdering their parents, nor the Scythians for eating their dead.*

The best writers seldom made use of argu-

* Plutarch relates, that Alexander, after conquering these countries, had reformed some of their evil habits.

ments drawn from future blessedness to inforce their moral instruction. Excellently as they discoursed on the beauty of virtue, their disquisitions generally seemed to want a motive and an end. Did not such a state of comfortless ignorance, of spiritual degradation, of moral depravity, emphatically call for a religion which should 'bring life and immortality to light?' Did it not imperatively require that Spirit which should 'reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?' Did it not pant for that blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.

Even those fine theorists who have left us beautiful reflections on the Divine nature, have bequeathed no rule for his worship, no direction for his service, no injunctions to obey him; they have given us little encouragement to virtue, and no alleviation to sorrow but the impracticable injunction, not to feel it. The eight short beatitudes in the 5th of Saint Matthew convey not only more promises to virtue, and more consolation to sufferers, but more appropriate promise to the individual grace, more specific comfort to the specific suffering, than are to be found in all the ancient tomes of moral discipline.

Those who were invested with a sacred character, and who delivered the pretended sense of the Oracles, talked much of the gods, but said little of goodness; while the philosophers who, though they were professors of wisdom, were, not generally to the vulgar, teachers of morals, seldom gave the Deity a place in their ethics. Between these conflicting instructors the people stood little chance of acquiring any just notions of moral rectitude. They were indeed under a necessity of attending the worship of the temples, they believed that the neglect of this duty would offend the gods; but in their attendance they were neither taught that purity of heart, nor that practical virtue, which might have been supposed likely to please them. The philosophers, if they were disposed to give the people some rules of duty, were overmatched by the priests, who knew they should gratify them more by omitting what they so little relished. As to the people themselves, they did not desire to be better than the priests wished to make them.—They found processions pleasanter than prayers, ceremonies cheaper than duties, and sacrifices easier than self-denials, with the additional recommendation, that the one made amends for the want of the other.*

When a violent plague raged in Rome, the method they took for appeasing the deities, and putting a stop to the distemper, was the establishment of a theatre and the introduction of plays. The plague however, having no dramatic taste, continued to rage. But neither the piety nor ingenuity of the suppliants was exhausted. A nail driven into the temple of Jupiter was found to be a more promising expedient. But the gods being as hard as the metal of which the expiation was made, were no more moved by the nail, than the plague had been by the theatrical exhibition; though the event was thought of sufficient importance for the creation of a dictator!—What progress had reason, to say nothing of religion, made in the first metropolis in the world, when a nail or a play was thought a rational expedient for pacifying the gods and stopping the pestilence. Nor does reason, mere human reason, seem to have grown wiser in her age. During the late attempt to establish heathenism in a neighbouring country, does it not look as if the thirty theatres which were opened every night in its capital in the early part of the revolution had been intended, in imitation of the Romans, whose religion, titles, and offices, the French affected to adopt, as a nightly expiation to the *Goddess of Reason* for the cruelties and carnage of the day?

Whatever conjectural notions some of the wise might entertain of a future state, the people at large could only acquire the vague and comfortless ideas of it, which might be picked up from the poets. This indefinite belief, immersed in fable, and degraded by the grossest superstition, added as little to the piety as to the happiness of mankind. The intimations of their Tartarus, and their Elysian fields, were so connected with fictions, as to convey to the mind no other impression, but that they were fictions themselves. Such uncertain glimmerings of such a futurity could afford neither warning nor encouragement, neither cheerful hope, nor salutary fear. They might amuse the mind, but never could influence the conduct. They might gratify the imagination, but could not communicate 'a hope full of immortality.' They neither animated the pious, nor succoured the tempted, nor supported the afflicted, nor cheered the dying.

The study of their mythology could carry with it nothing but corruption. It neither intended to bring glory to God, nor peace and good will, much less salvation, to men. It was invented to embellish the fabulous periods of their history, to flatter the illustrious families, by celebrating the human exploits of their deified progenitors: and thus to give an additional and national interest to their bewitching fables. What a system did those countries uphold, when the more probable way to make the people virtuous, was to keep them ignorant of religion!—when the best way to teach them their duty to man, was to keep their duties out of sight.

It is indeed but justice to acknowledge, the most of the different schools of philosophy held some one great truth. Aristotle maintained the existence of a First Cause; Cicero, in opposition to the disciples of Epicurus, acknowledged a superintending Providence. Many of the Stoics were of opinion, that the consummation of all things would be effected by fire. Yet every philosopher, however rational in many parts of his system, not only adopted some absurdity himself, but wove it into his code. One believed that the soul was only a vapour, which was transmuted from body to body, and was to expiate, in the shape of a brute, the sins it had committed under that of a man. Another affirmed that the soul was a material substance, and that matter was endowed with the faculties of thought and reason. Others imagined every star to be a god. Some denied not only a superintending, but a creating Providence: insisting that the world was made, without any plan or

* See Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity.

contrivance, by a fortuitous concourse of certain particles of matter; and that the members of the human body were not framed for the several purposes to which they have been accidentally applied. One affirmed the eternity of the world; another, that we can be certain of nothing,—that even our own existence is doubtful.

A religion so absurd, which had no basis even in probability and no attraction but what it borrowed from a preposterous fancy, could not satisfy the deep thinking philosopher; a philosophy abstruse and metaphysical was not sufficiently accommodated to general use to suit the people. Lactantius, on the authority of Plato, relates, that Socrates declared there was no such thing as human wisdom. In short, all were dissatisfied. The wise had a vague desire for religion which comprehended great objects, and had noble ends in view. The people stood in need of a religion which should bring relief to human wants, and consolation to human miseries. They wanted a simple way, proportioned to their comprehension; a short way, proportioned to their leisure; a living way, which would give light to the conscience and support to the mind; a way founded, not on speculation, but evidence, which should carry conversion to the heart as well as conviction to the understanding. Such a religion God was preparing for them in the Gospel of his Son. Christianity was calculated to supply the exigences both of the Greeks and of the barbarians; but the former, though they more acknowledged their want, more slowly welcomed the relief; while the latter, though they less felt the one, more readily accepted the other.

Alexander, though he had the magnanimity to declare to his illustrious preceptor, that he had rather excel in knowledge than in power, yet blamed him for divulging to the world those secrets in learning, which he wished to confine exclusively to themselves. How would he have been offended with the Christian philosophy, which, though it has mysteries for all, has no secrets for any! How would he have been offended with that bright hope of glory, which would have displayed itself in the same effulgence to his meanest soldier, as to the conqueror of Persia!

But how would both the monarch and the philosopher have looked on a religion, which after kindling their curiosity, by intimating it had greater things to bestow than learning and empire, should dash their high hopes, by making these great things consist in poverty of spirit, in being little in their own eyes, in not loving the world, nor the things of the world.

But what would they have said to a religion which placed human intellect in an inferior degree in the scale of God's gifts; and even degraded it from thence, when not used to his glory? What would they have thought of a religion, which, so far from being sent exclusively to the conqueror in arms, or the leaders in science, frankly declared at its outset, that 'not many mighty, not many noble were called,' which professed, while it filled the hungry with good things, to send the rich empty away?

Yet that mysterious Hope which Alexander declared was all he kept for himself, when he profusely scattered kingdoms among his favourites,—those ambiguous TEARS which he shed, because he had no more worlds to conquer; that deeply felt, but ill understood hope, those undefined and unintelligible tears, mark a profounder feeling of the vanity of this world, a more fervent panting after something better than power or knowledge, a more heart-felt 'longing after immortality,' than almost any express language which philosophy has recorded.

'Learn of me' would have been thought a dignified exordium for the founder of a new religion by the masters of the Grecian schools. But when they came to the humbling motive of the injunction, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart,' how would their expectations have been damped? They would have thought it an abject declaration from the lips of a great teacher, unless they had understood that grand paradox of Christianity, that lowliness of heart was among the highest attainments to be made by a rational creature.

When they had heard the beginning of that animating interrogation,—Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? methinks I behold the whole portico and academy emulously rush forward at an invitation so alluring, at a challenge so personal; but how instinctively would they have shrunk back at the repulsive question which succeeds;—Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Yet would not Christianity, well understood and faithfully received, have taught these exalted spirits, that, to look down upon what is humanly great, is a loftier attainment than to look up to it?

Would it not have carried a sentiment to the heart of Alexander, a system to the mind of Aristotle, which their respective, though differently pursued, careers of ambition utterly failed of furnishing to either?

Reason, even by those who possessed it in the highest perfection, as it gave no adequate view even of natural religion, so it made no adequate provision for correct morals. The attempt appears to have been above the reach of human powers. 'God manifested in the flesh,—He who was not only true, but THE TRUTH, and who taught the truth as 'one having authority,'—was alone competent to this great work. The duty of submission to Divine Power was to the multitude more intelligible, than the intricate deductions of reason. That God is, and is a rewarder of them that seek him; that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, make a compendious summary both of natural and revealed religion; they are propositions which carry their own explanation, disentangled from those trains of argument, which, as few could have been brought to comprehend, perhaps it was the greatest wisdom in the philosopher never to have proposed them.

The most skilful dialectician could only reason on known principles; but without the superinduction of revealed religion, he could only, with all his efforts, and they have been prodigious, furnish 'rules,' but not 'arms.' Logic is indeed a powerful weapon to fence, but not to fight with; that which is a conqueror in the schools is impotent in the field. It is powerful to refute a sophism, but weak to repel a tempta-

tion. It may defeat an opponent made up like itself of pure intellect; but is no match for so substantial an assailant as moral evil. It yields to the onset, when the antagonists are furious passions and headstrong appetites. It can make a successful thrust against an opinion, but is too feeble to 'pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan.'

If, through the strength of human corruption, the restraining power of Divine grace is still too frequently resisted,—if the offered light of the Holy Spirit is still too frequently quenched, what must have been the state of mankind, when that grace was not made known, when that light was not fully revealed, when 'darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people?' But under the clear illumination of evangelical truth, every precept becomes a principle, every argument a motive, every direction a duty, every doctrine a law; and why? *Because thus saith the Lord.*

Christianity, however, is not merely a religion of authority; the soundest reason embraces most confidently what the most explicit revelation has taught, and the deepest inquirer is usually the most convinced Christian. The reason of philosophy, is a disputing reason, that of Christianity, an obeying reason. The glory of the pagan religion consisted in virtuous sentiments, the glory of the Christian in the pardon and the subjugation of sin. The humble Christian may say with one of the ancient Fathers.—I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed.

CHAP. II.

On the Historical writers of the New Testament.

Among the innumerable evidences of the truth of Christianity, there is one of so rare and extraordinary a nature, as might of itself suffice to carry conviction to the mind of every unprejudiced inquirer, even if this proof were not accompanied by such a cloud of concurring testimonies.

The sacred volume is composed by a vast variety of writers, men of every different rank and condition, of every diversity of character and turn of mind: the monarch and the plebian, the illiterate and the learned, the foremost in talent and the moderately gifted in natural advantages, the historian and the legislator, the orator and the poet,—each had his immediate vocation, each his peculiar province: some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, living in ages remote from each other, under different modes of civil government, under different dispensations of the Divine economy, filling a period of time which reached from the first dawn of heavenly light to its meridian radiance. The Old Testament and the New, the law and the gospel; the prophets predicting events, and the evangelists recording them; the doctrinal yet didactic epistolary writers and he who closed the Sacred Canon in the apocalyptic vision;—all these furnished their respective portions, and yet all tally with a dovetailed correspondence: all the different materials are joined with a completeness the most satisfactory, with an agreement the most incontrovertible.

This instance of uniformity without design, of agreement without contrivance; this consistency maintained through a long series of ages, without a possibility of the ordinary methods for conducting such a plan; these unparalleled congruities, these unexampled coincidences, form altogether a species of evidence, of which there is no other instance in the history of all the other books in the world.

All these variously gifted writers here enumerated, concur in this grand peculiarity, that all have the same end in view, all are pointing to the same object, all, without any projected collusion, are advancing the same scheme; each brings in his several contingent, without any apparent consideration how it may unite with the portions brought by other contributors, without any spirit of accommodation, without any visible intention to make out a case, without indeed any actual resemblance, more than that every separate portion being derived from the same spring, each must be governed by one common principle, and that principle being Truth itself, must naturally and consentaneously produce assimilation, conformity, agreement. What can we conclude from all this, but what is indeed the inevitable conclusion,—a conclusion which forces itself on the mind, and compels the submission of the understanding; that all this, under differences of administration, is the work of one and the same great, Omniscient, and Eternal Spirit.

If, however, from the general uniformity of plan, visible throughout the whole Sacred Canon, results one of the most cogent and complete arguments for its Divine original, others will also rise from its mode of execution, its peculiar diversities, and some other circumstances attending it, not so easily brought under one single point of view.—Does it not look as if Almighty Wisdom refused to divide the glory of his revelation with man, when, passing by the shining lights of the pagan world, He chose, in the promulgation of the Gospel, to make use of men of ordinary endowments, men possessing the usual defects and prejudices of persons so educated and so circumstanced? Not only the other immediate followers, but even the biographers of Christ, were persons of no distinguished abilities. Integrity was almost their sole, as it were the most requisite qualification. On this point it is not too much to maintain, that the writings of each of these men are not only so consistent with each other, but also with themselves, as to offer, individually, as well as aggregately, a proof of their own veracity, as well as of the truth itself.

Had they, however, all recorded uniformly the same more inconsiderable particulars; had there not been that natural diversity, that incidental variation, observable in all other historians;—had not one preserved passages which the others overlooked, some recording more of the actions of Jesus, others treasuring up more of his discourses; some particularizing the circumstances of his birth; others only referring to it as a fact not requiring fresh authentication; another again

plainly adverting to it by 'the WORD that was made flesh, and dwelt among us;' and adding a new circumstance by citing the testimony of the Baptist to 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;'—in short, had there been in the several relations not mere consistency, but positive identity, then, not only the fidelity of the writers would have been questionable, and concert and design justly have been suspected, but we should in effect have had only the testimony of one Gospel instead of four.

But to pass to other evidences of truth.—The manner in which these writers speak of themselves, is at once a proof of their humility and of their veracity. The conversion of Saint Matthew is slightly related by himself and in the most modest terms. He simply says, speaking in the third person; 'Jesus saw a man named Matthew, and saith unto him, Follow me: and he arose and followed him: and as Jesus sat at meat in the house, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him.'* Not a word is said of a sacrifice so honourable to himself, and so generously recorded by Saint Luke in those words, *he left all*, and followed him; not a word of the situation he renounced at the first call of the Master, and which appears to have been lucrative, from 'the great feast he made for him in his own house, and the great company of publicans and others who sat down with him.'† Saint Luke relates only his hospitality; Saint Matthew, as if to abase himself the more, describes only the sinners which made up his society previous to his conversion.

These sober recorders of events the most astonishing, are never carried away by the circumstances they relate, into any pomp of diction, into any use of superlatives. There is not, perhaps, in the whole Gospel a single interjection, nor an exclamation, nor any artifice to call the readers attention to the marvels of which the relaters were the witnesses. Absorbed in their holy task, no alien idea presents itself to their mind: the object before them fills it. They never digress, are never called away by the solicitations of vanity, or the suggestions of curiosity. No image starts up to divert their attention. There is indeed, in the Gospels, much imagery, much allusion, much allegory, but they proceed from their Lord, and are recorded as his. The writers never fill up the intervals between events. They leave circumstances to make their own impression, instead of helping out the reader by any reflections of their own. They always feel the holy ground on which they stand. They preserve the gravity of history and the severity of truth, without enlarging the outline or swelling the expression.

The Evangelists all agree in this most unequivocal character of veracity, that of criminating themselves. They record their own errors and offences with the same simplicity with which they relate the miracles and sufferings of their Lord. Indeed their dulness, mistakes, and failings are so intimately blended with his history, by their continual demands upon his patience and forbearance, as to make no inconsiderable or unimportant part of it.

This fidelity is equally amiable both in the composition, and in the preservation of the Old Testament, a book which every where testifies against those whose history it contains, and not seldom against the relators themselves. The author of the Pentateuch proclaims, in the most pointed terms, the ingratitude of the chosen people towards God. He prophesies that they will go on filling up the measure of their offences, calls heaven and earth to witness against them that he has delivered his own soul, declares that as they have worshipped gods which were no gods, God will punish them by calling a people who were no people. Yet this book, so disgraceful to their national character, this register of their own offences, they would rather die than lose. 'This,' says the admirable Pascal, 'is an instance of integrity which has no example in the world, no root in nature. In the Pentateuch and the Gospel, therefore, these parallel, these unequalled instances of sincerity, are incontrovertible proofs of the truth of both.

It is obvious that the impression which was to be made should owe nothing to the skill, but every thing to the veracity of the writers. They never tried to improve upon the doctrines or the requirements of their Master, by mixing their own wisdom with them. Though their views were not clear, their obedience was implicit. It was not, however, a mere mechanical obedience, but an undisputing submission to the Divine teaching. Even at the glorious scene of the Transfiguration, their amazement did not get the better of their fidelity. There was no vain impatience to disclose the wonders which had passed, and of which they had been allowed the honour of being witnesses. Though they inserted it afterwards in their narrations, 'they, as they were commanded, kept it close, and told no man in those days what they had seen.'

The simplicity of the narrative is never violated; there is even no panegyric on the august person they commemorate, not a single epithet of commendation. When they mention an extraordinary effect of his divine eloquence, it is history, not eulogy, that speaks. They say nothing of their own admiration; it is '*the people* who were astonished at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.' Again, it was 'the *multitudes* marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel.' Again, it was the *officers*, not the writer, who said, 'never man spake like this man.'

In recording the most stupendous events, we are never called to an exhibition of their own pity, or their own admiration. In relating the most soul-moving circumstance, there is no attempt to be pathetic, no aim to work up the feelings of the reader, no appeal to his sympathy, no studied finish, no elaborate excitement. Jesus wept;—no comment. He is hungry;—no compassion escapes them. He is transfigured;—no expression of astonishment. He is agonized;—the narrative does not rise in emphasis. He is betrayed;—no execration to the betrayer. He is condemned;—no animadversions on the iniquitous judge; while their own denial and desertion are faithfully recorded. He expires;—no remark on the tremendous catastrophe, no display of their own sorrow. Facts alone sup

* Matthew, ch. ix. † St. Luke, ch. v.

ply the void; and what facts? The earth quakes, the sun is eclipsed, the graves give up their dead. In such a history, it is very true, fidelity was praise, fact was glory. And yet, if, on the one hand, there were no need of the rhetorician's art to embellish the tale, what mere rhetoricians could have abstained from using it?

Thus, it seems obvious, that unlettered men were appointed to this great work, in order that the success of the Gospel might not be suspected of owing any thing to natural ability, or to splendid attainment. This arrangement while it proves the astonishing progress of Christianity to have been caused by its own energy, serves to remove every just suspicion of the contrivance of fraud, the collusions of interest, or the artifices of invention.

Had the first apostles been men of genius, they might have injured the purity of the Gospel by bringing their ingenuity into it.—Had they been men of learning, they might have imported from the schools of Greece and Rome, each from his own sect, some of its peculiar infusions, and thus have vitiated the simplicity of the Gospel. Had they been critics and philosophers, there might have been endless debates which part of Christianity was the power of God, and which the result of man's wisdom. Thus, though corruptions soon crept into the church, yet no impurities could reach the Gospel itself. Some of its teachers became heretical, but the pure word remained unadulterated. However, the philosophizing or the Judaizing teachers might subsequently infuse their own errors into their own preaching, the Gospel preserved its own integrity. They might mislead their followers, but they could not deteriorate the New Testament.

It required different gifts to promulgate and to maintain Christianity. The Evangelists did not so much attempt to argue the truth of the Redeemer's doctrines, as practically to prove that they were of Divine origin. If called on for a defence, they worked a miracle. If they could not produce a cogent argument, they could produce a paralytic walking. If they could not open the eyes of the prejudiced, they could open the eyes of the blind. Such attestation was to the eye-witnesses, argument the most unanswerable. The most illiterate persons could judge of this species of evidence so peculiar to Christianity. He could know whether he saw a sick man restored to life by a word, or a lame man take up his bed and walk, or one who had been dead four days, instantly obey the call—'Lazarus, come forth!' About a sentiment there might be a diversity of suffrages; about an action which all saw, all could entertain but one opinion. The caviller might have refuted a syllogysm, and a fallacy might have imposed on the multitude, but no sophistry could counteract ocular demonstration.

But as God does nothing in vain, so he never employs irrelevant instruments or superfluous means. He therefore did not see fit to be at the expense of a perpetual miracle to maintain and carry on that church which he had thought proper to establish by miraculous powers. When, therefore, the Gospel was immutably fixed on its own eternal basis, and its truth unimpeachably settled by the authentic testimony of so many eye witnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; a writer was brought forward, contemporary, but not connected with them. Not only was he not confederate with the first instituters of Christianity; but so implacably hostile was he to them, that he had assisted at the death of the first martyr.

As the attestation of one notorious enemy in favour of a cause, is considered equivalent to that of many friends; thus did this distinguished adversary seem to be raised up to confirm and ratify all the truths he had so furiously opposed; to become the most able advocate of the cause he had reprobated, the most powerful champion of the Saviour he had vilified. He was raised up to unfold more at large those doctrines which could not be so explicitly developed in the historical portions, while an immediate revelation from heaven supplied to him the actual opportunities and advantages which the Evangelists had enjoyed. Nothing short of such a Divine communication could have placed Saint Paul on a level with the other apostles; had he been taught of man, he must have been inferior to those who were taught of Jesus.

For Saint Paul had not the honour to be the personal disciple of his Lord. His conversion and preaching were subsequent to the illumination of the Gospel; an intimation possibly, that though revelation and human learning should not be considered as sharing between them the work of spiritual instruction, yet that human learning might henceforward become a valuable adjunct, and a most suitable, though subordinate accessory in maintaining the cause of that Divine truth which it had no hand in establishing.

The ministry of Paul was not to be circumscribed, as that of his immediate precursors had been, by the narrow limits of the Jewis church. As he was designated to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, as he was to bear his testimony before rulers and scholars; as he was to carry his mission into the presence of 'kings, and not be ashamed,'—it pleased Infinite Wisdom, which always fits the instrument to the work, and the talent to the exigence, to accommodate most exactly the endowments of Paul to the demands that would be made upon them; and as Divine Providence caused Moses to acquire in Egypt the learning which was to prepare him for the legislator of a people so differently circumstanced, it pleased the same Infinite Wisdom to convey to Paul, through the mouth of a Jewish teacher, the knowledge he was to employ for the Gentiles, and to adapt his varied acquirements to the various ranks, characters, prejudices, and local circumstances of those before whom he was to advocate the noblest cause ever assigned to man.

Of all these providential advantages he availed himself with a wisdom, aptness, and appropriateness, without a parallel;—a wisdom derived from that Divine Spirit which guided all his thoughts, words, and actions: and with a teachableness which demonstrated that he was never *disobedient to the heavenly vision.*

Indeed it seemed necessary, in order to demonstrate that the principles of Christianity are not unattainable, nor its precepts impracticable,

that the New Testament should in some part, present to us a full exemplification of its doctrines and of its spirit; that they should to produce their practical effect, be embodied in a form purely human,—for the character of the founder of its religion is deified humanity. Did the Scriptures present no such exhibition, infidelity might have availed itself of the omission, for the purpose of asserting that Christianity was only a bright chimera, a beautiful fiction of the imagination; and Plato's fair idea might have been brought into competition with the doctrines of the Gospel. But in St. Paul is exhibited a portrait which not only illustrates its Divine truth, but establishes its moral efficacy; a portrait entirely free from any distortion in the drawing, from any extravagance in the colouring.

It is the representation of a man struggling with the sins and infirmities natural to man; yet habitually triumphing over them by that Divine grace which had first rescued him from prejudice, bigotry, and unbelief.—It represents him resisting, not only such temptations as are common to men, but surmounting trials to which no other man was ever called; furnishing in his whole practice not only an instructor, but a model; showing every where in his writings, that the same offers, the same supports, the same victories, are tendered to every suffering child of mortality,—that the waters of eternal life are not restricted to prophets and apostles, but are offered freely to every one that thirsteth—offered without money and without price.

CHAP. III.

On the epistolary writers of the New Testament, particularly St. Paul.

Can the reader of taste and feeling who has followed the much enduring hero of the Odyssey with growing delight and increasing sympathy, though in a work of fiction, through all his wanderings, peruse with inferior interest the genuine voyages of the Apostle of the Gentiles over nearly the same seas? The fabulous adventurer, once landed, and safe on the shores of his own Ithica, the reader's mind is satisfied for the object of his anxiety is at rest. But not so ends the tale of the Christian hero. Whoever closed Saint Luke's narrative of the diversified events of Saint Paul's travels; whoever accompanied him with the interest his history demands, from the commencement of his trials at Damascus to his last deliverance from shipwreck, and left him *preaching in his own hired house at Rome*, without feeling as if he had abruptly lost sight of some one very dear to him, without sorrowing that they should see his face no more, without indulging a wish that the intercourse could have been carried on to the end, though that end were martyrdom.

Such readers, and perhaps only such, will rejoice to renew their acquaintance with this *very chiefest of the Apostles;* not indeed in the communication of subsequent facts, but of important principles; not in the records of the biographer, but in the doctrines of the saint. In fact, to the history of Paul in the Sacred Oracles succeed his Epistles. And these Epistles, as if through design, open with that 'to the beloved of God called to be saints' in that very city, the mention of his residence in which concludes the preceding narrative.

Had the Sacred Canon closed with the evangelical narrations, had it not been determined in the counsels of Divine Wisdom, that a subsequent portion of inspired Scripture in another form, should have been added to the historical portions, that the Epistles should have conveyed to us the results of the mission and the death of Christ, how immense would have been the disadvantage, and how irreparable the loss: May we presume to add, how much less perfect would have been our view of the scheme of Christianity, had the New Testament been curtailed of this important portion of religious and practical instruction.

We should indeed have felt the same adoring gratitude for the benefits of the Redeemer, but we should have been in comparative ignorance of the events consequent upon his resurrection. We should have been totally at a loss to know how and by whom the first Christian churches were founded; how they were conducted, and what was their progress. We should have had but a slender notion of the manner in which Christianity was planted, and how wonderfully it flourished in the heathen soil. Above all, we should have been deprived of that divine instruction, equally the dictate of the Holy Spirit, with which the Epistles abound; or, which would have been worse than ignorance, uninspired men, fanatics, or impostors would have attached to the Gospel their glosses, conceits, errors, and misinterpretations.—We should have been turned over for information to some of those spurious gospels, and more than doubtful epistles, of which mention is made in the early part of ecclesiastical history. What attempts might have been made by such writers, to amuse curiosity with a sequel of the history of the persons named in the New Testament! How might they have misled us by unprofitable details of the Virgin Mary, or of Joseph of Arimathea!

What legends might have been invented, what idolatry even might have been incorporated with the true worship of God; what false history appended to the authentic record! Not only is the Divine Wisdom manifest in carrying on through the Epistles a confirmation of the Spirit and power of Christianity, but the same design is no less apparent in closing the book with the Apocalypse,—a writing which contains the testimony of the last surviving disciple of Jesus is extreme old age, to which he seems to have been providentially preserved for the very purpose of protecting the Gospel from innovations which were beginning to corrupt it.

The narratives of the Evangelists would indeed have remained perfect in themselves, even without the Epistles; but never could its truths have been so clearly understood, or its doctrines so fully developed, as they now are. Our Saviour himself intimated, that there would be a more full and complete knowledge of his doctrines, after he had ceased to deliver them, than

there was at the time. How indeed could the doctrine of the atonement, and of pardon through his blood, have been so explicitly set forth during his life, as they afterwards were in the Epistles, especially in those of St. Paul.

Saint Luke, in the opening of the Acts of the Apostles, referring the friend to whom he inscribes it, to his 'former Treatise of all that Jesus began to do, and to teach, till he was taken up, after that he had through the Holy Ghost given commandment to the Apostles' seems plainly to indicate that the *doing* and the *teaching* were to be carried on by them. All their doubts were at length removed. They had now a plenary conviction of the divinity of Christ's person, and of the dignity of his mission. They had now witnessed his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. They had attained the fullest assurance of the truths they were to proclaim, and had had time to acquire the completest certainty of their moral efficacy on the heart and life.

It was therefore ordained by that Wisdom which cannot err, that the Apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, should work up all the doctrines of the anterior Scriptures into a more systematic form:—that they should more fully unfold their doctrines, extract the essence of their separate maxims, collect the scattered rays of spiritual light into a focus; and blend the whole into one complete body.

The Epistles, therefore, are an estimable appendix to the Evangelists. The memoir, which contains the actions of the Apostles, the work of an Evangelist also, stands between these two portions of the New Testament. Thus, no chasm is left, and the important events which this connecting link supplies—particularly the descent of the Holy Spirit, the emblematic vision of Saint Peter, and the conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul,—naturally prepare the mind for that full and complete commentary on the historical books, which the Epistles, more especially those of Saint Paul, present to us.

St. Paul was favoured with a particular revelation, a personal disclosure to him of the truths with which the other disciples were previously acquainted. This special distinction placed Paul on a level with his precursors. Though, in point of fact, he added nothing to the Gospel revelation, and in point of doctrine he only gave a larger exposition of truths previously communicated, of duties already enjoined, yet here was the warrant of his teaching, the broad seal of his apostleship. And unless we fall into the gross error of insisting that the Epistles in general would not equally be given by inspiration with other parts of the New Testament, I see not how any can withhold, from the Epistles of St. Paul in particular, that reverence which they profess to entertain for the entire letter of revelation.

It is a hardship to which all writers on subjects exclusively religious are liable, that if, while they are warmly pressing some great and important point, they omit at the same time, to urge some other point of great moment also, which they equally believe, but which they cannot in that connexion introduce without breaking in on their immediate train of argument, they are accused of rejecting what they are obliged to overlook, though in its proper place they have repeatedly insisted upon that very truth; nay, though the whole tendency of their writings shows their equal faith in the doctrine they are said to have neglected. To this disingenuous treatment, amongst other more serious attacks upon his character, no author has been more obnoxious than the Apostle Paul. It has been often intimated, that in dwelling on the efficacy of the death of Christ, he has not urged with sufficient frequency and energy the importance of Christian practice. He seems himself to have foreseen the probability of this reproach, and has accordingly provided against the consequence that would be drawn from his positions, if taken separately. It would be an endless task to cite the passages in which he is continually defending his doctrine against these anticipated misrepresentations. Among other modes of refutation, he sometimes states these false charges in the way of interrogatories: 'Do we make void the law through faith?' And not contented with the solemn negative, 'God forbid!' he adds a positive affirmative to the contrary: 'Yea we *establish* the law.' In a similar manner he is beforehand with his censors in denying the expected charge—'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' and he obtests the same Almighty name to his opposite practice. Readers, of different views, are without ceasing, on the watch to take advantage of all the epistolary writers in this respect, while the fair method would surely be to form the general judgment, from the whole tenor and collective spirit of their writings.

But it has been argued with still greater boldness, that St. Paul was not a disciple.—Granted. But his miraculous conversion entitled him to the confidence, which some men more willingly place in those who were. This event is substantially recorded by Saint Luke: as if he foresaw the distrust which might hereafter arise, he has added to his first relation, in the 9th chapter of the Acts, two several reports of the same circumstance made by Saint Paul himself, first to the Jews, and afterwards to Festus and Agrippa. As Luke has recorded this astonishing fact three several times, we are not left to depend for its truth entirely on Saint Paul's own frequent allusions to it.

Much suspicion of this great Apostle is avowedly grounded on the remark of Saint Peter, who in adverting to his 'beloved brother Paul,' observes, that 'in his Epistles are some things hard to be understood, which they who are unstable and unlearned wrest to their own destruction.' Here the critic would desire to stop, or rather to garble the sentence which adds, 'as they do also the other Scriptures;' thus casting the accusation, not upon Saint Paul or 'the other Scriptures,' but upon the misinterpreters of both. But Saint Peter farther includes in the same passage, that 'Paul accounts the long-suffering of God to be salvation, *according to the wisdom given him.*' It is apparent, therefore, that though there may be more difficulty, there is not more danger in Saint Paul's Epistles, than in the rest of the Sacred Volume. Let us also observe what is the characters of these subverters of truth,—

the 'unstable' in principle and 'unlearned' in doctrine. If, then, you feel yourself in danger of being misled, in which of these classes will you desire to enrol your name? But it is worthy of observation, that, in this supposed censure of Saint Peter, we have in reality a most valuable testimony, not only to the excellence, but also to the inspiration of Saint Paul's writings; for he not only ascribes their composition to *the wisdom given unto him*, but puts them on a par with *the other Scriptures*,—a double corroboration of their Divine character.

This passage of St. Peter, then, is so far from impugning the character of Paul to Divine Inspiration, that we have here the fact itself established upon the authority of a favourite disciple and companion of Jesus. To invalidate such a testimony would be no less than to shake the pillars of revelation.

Besides, as an eminent divine has observed, 'if Saint Paul had been only a good man writing under that general assistance of the Spirit common to good men, it would be ascribing far too much to his compositions to suppose that the misunderstanding them could effect the *destruction* of the reader.'

Saint Peter says only, that 'some things' are difficult; but are there not difficulties in every part of Divine revelation, in all the operations of God, in all the dispensations of Providence; difficulties insuperable in the natural as well as the spiritual world? Difficulties in the formation of the human body; in the union of that perishable body with its immortal companion? Is it not then probable that some difficulties in various parts of the Divine Oracles may be purposely left for the humiliation of pride, for the exercise of patience, for the test of submission, for the honour of faith? But allowing that in Paul some things *are* hard to be understood, that is no reason for rejecting such things as are easy, for rejecting *all* things. Why should the very large proportion that is clear, be slighted for the very small one that is obscure? Scholars do not so treat an ancient poet or historian. One or two perplexing passages, instead of shaking the credit of an author, rather whet the critic to a nearer investigation. Even if the local difficulty should prove invincible, it does not lessen the general interest excited by the work. They who compare spiritual things with spiritual, which is the true Biblical criticism, must perceive that the epistolary writers do not more entirely agree with each other, than they agree with the doctrines, precepts, and promises delivered on the Mount. And as the Sermon on the Mount is an exposition of the law of Moses, so the Epistles are an exposition of the law of Christ. Yet some persons discredit the one, from an exclusive veneration for the other.

But is it not so derogatory from the dignity of our Lord to disparage the epistolary discussions written under the direction of his Holy Spirit, written with a view to lay open in the clearest manner the truths he taught in the Gospel, as it would be to depreciate the facts themselves, which that Gospel records?

The more general respect for the Gospels seems partly to arise from the circumstance that they contain facts: the disregard implied for the Epistles from this cause,—that they enforce doctrines. The former, the generality feel they dare not resist; the latter they think they can oppose with more impunity. But of how much less value would be the record of these astonishing facts if there were neither doctrines to grow out of them, nor precepts to be built upon them! And where should we look for the full instruction to be deduced from both, but in the commentaries of those, to whom the charge of expounding the truths previously taught was committed? Our Saviour himself has left no written record. As the Father committed all judgment to the Son, so the Son committed all written instruction to his select servants.

One of these, who had written a Gospel, wrote also three Epistles. Another carried on the sequel of the Evangelical history. If these men are worthy of confidence in one instance, why not in another? Fourteen of the Epistles were written by one who had an express revelation from Heaven; all the rest, the single chapter of Saint Jude excepted, by the distinguished apostles who were honoured with the privilege of witnessing the transfiguration of their Lord. The three Epistles of Saint John are only a prolonged expression of the devout feelings which breathe throughout his narrative, the same lively manifestation of the *word made flesh*, which shines throughout his Gospel.

In the Gospel, the doctrines and precepts are more dogmatically enjoined: in the Epistles they are enforced more argumentatively. The structure of the Epistle addressed to the Romans is the most systematical. All are equally consistent with each other, and with the general tenor of the antecedent Scriptures.

Does it not look as if the marked distinction which some readers make between the historical and the epistolary portions, arose from a most erroneous belief that they can more commodiously reconcile their own views, opinions, and practice, with the narratives of the Evangelists, than with the keen, penetrating, heart-exploring exposition of those very doctrines which are equally found, but not equally expanded, in the Gospels? These critical discoverers, however, may rest assured, that there is nothing more strong, nothing more pointed, nothing more unequivocally plain, nothing more awfully severe in any part of Saint Paul's writings than in the discourses of our Lord himself. He would indeed have overshot his duty in the same proportion in which he had outgone his Master. Does Paul enjoin any thing more contrary to nature than the excision of a right hand, or the plucking out of a right eye? Does Paul any where exhibit a menace, I will not say *more* alarming, but so repeatedly alarming, as his Divine Master, who expressly, in one chapter only, the 9th of St. Mark, three several times denounces eternal punishment on the irreclaimably impenitent, awfully marking out not only the specific place, but the specific torment,—the undying worm, and the unquenched fire?

No: these scrupulous objectors add nothing to the character of our Lord, by what they subduct from that of his apostle. Perfection admits of no improvement; deity of no addition. To degrade any portion of the revealed will of God

is no proof of reverence for Him whose will is revealed. But it is preposterous to insinuate, that a regard for the Epistles is calculated to diminish a regard for the Gospels. Where else can we find such believing, such admiring, such adoring views of him whose life the Gospel records? Where else are we so grounded in that love which passeth knowledge? Where else are we so continually taught to be looking unto Jesus? Where else are we so powerfully reminded that there is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved? We may as well assert, that the existing laws, of which *Magna Charta* is the original, diminish our reverence for this palladium itself; this basis of our political security, as the Gospel is of our moral and spiritual privileges. In both cases the derived benefit sends us back to the wellhead from whence it flows.

He who professes to read the Holy Scriptures for his 'instruction,' should recollect, whenever he is disposed to be captious, that they are written also for his correction. If we really believe that Christ speaks to us in the Gospel, we must believe that he speaks to us in the Epistles also. In the one he addresses us in his militant, in the other in his glorified character. In one, the Divine Instructor speaks to us on earth; in the other, from heaven. The internal wisdom, the divinity of the doctrines, the accordance both of doctrine and precept with those delivered by the Saviour himself, the powerful and abiding effects which, for near two thousand years they have produced, and are actually producing, on the hearts and lives of multitudes; the same spirit which inspired the writer is still ready to assist the reader; all together forming, to every serious inquirer who reads them with an humble heart and a docile spirit, irrefragable arguments, unimpeachable evidence that they possess as full a claim to inspiration, and consequently have as forcible demand on his belief and obedience, as any of the less litigated portions of the book of God.

Whoever, then, shall sit down to the perusal of these epistles without prejudice, will not rise from it without improvement. In any human science we do not lay aside the whole, because some parts are more difficult than others; we are rather stimulated to the work by the difficulty, than deterred from it; because we believe the attainment will reward the perseverance. There is, indeed, an essential difference between a diagram and a doctrine, the apprehension of the one solely depending on the capacity and application of the student, while the understanding of the other depends not merely on the industry, but on the temper with which we apply. 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him.'

Let any reader say, if after perusing Saint Luke's biographical sketch of the Acts of the Apostles, after contemplating the work of the Spirit of God, and its effects on the lives and the preaching of these primitive saints, whether he has not attained an additional insight into the genius and the results of Christianity since he finished reading the Evangelist? Let him say further, whether the light of Revelation, shining more and more as he advances, does not, in his adding the perusal of the Epistles to that of the Acts, pour in upon his mental eye the full and perfect day?

As there was more leisure, as well as a more appropriate space, in the Epistles for building up Christianity as a system than in the Gospels, so these wise master-builders, 'building on no other foundation than that which was laid,' borrowed all the materials for the glorious edifice from the anterior Scriptures. They brought from their precursors in the immortal work, the hewn stones with which the spiritual temple is constructed, and having compacted it with that which every portion supplied; squared, rounded, and polished the precious mass into perfect form and shape, into complete beauty and everlasting strength.

CHAP. IV.

Saint Paul's Faith, a Practical Principle.

There are some principles and seeds of nature, some elements in the character of man, not indisposed for certain acts of virtue; we mean virtue as distinguished from the principle of pleasing God by the act or sentiment. Some persons naturally hate cruelty, others spurn at injustice, this man detests covetousness, that abhors oppression. Some of these dispositions certain minds find, and others fancy, within themselves. But for a man to go entirely out of himself, to live upon trust, to renounce all confidence in virtues which he possesses, and in actions which he performs,; to cast himself entirely upon another; to seek to be justified, not by his own obedience, but by the obedience of that other; to look for eternal happiness, not from the merit of his own life, but from that of another's death, that death the most degrading, after a life the most despised; for all this revolution in the mind and heart, there is no foundation, no seed, no element in nature; it is foreign to the make of man; if possessed, it is bestowed; if felt, it is derived; it is not a production, but an infusion; it is a principle, not indigenous, but implanted. The Apostle implies that faith is not inherent, when he says, 'to you it is *given* to believe.'

This superinduced principle is Faith, a principle not only not inherent in nature, but diametrically contrary to it; a principle which takes no root in the soil of the natural heart; *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.* Its result is not merely a reform, but a new life,—a life governed by the same principle which first communicated it.

The faith of mere assent, that faith which is purely a conviction of the understanding seldom stirs beyond the point at which it first sits down. Being established on the same common ground with any scientific truth, or any acknowledged fact, it is not likely to advance, desiring nothing more than to retain its station among other accepted truths, and thus it continues to reside in the intellect alone. Though its local existence is allowed, it exhibits none of the undoubted signs of life,—activity, motion, growth.

But that vital faith with which the souls of the Scripture saints were so richly imbued, is an animating and pervading principle. It spreads and enlarges in its progress. It gathers energy as its proceeds. The more advanced are its attainments, the more prospective are its views. The nearer it approaches to the invisible realities to which it is stretching forward, the more their dominion over it increases, till it almost makes the future present, and the unseen visible. Its light becomes brighter, its flame purer, its aspirations stronger. Its increasing proximity to its object fills the mind, warms the heart, clears the sight, quickens the pace.

But as faith is of a spiritual nature, it cannot be kept alive without spiritual means. It requires for its sustenance aliment congenial with itself. Meditation familiarizes it with its object; prayer keeps it close to its end. If thus cherished by perpetual exercise, sustained by the habitual contemplation of the oracles of God, and watered with the dews of his grace, it becomes the pregnant seed of every Christian virtue.

The Holy Scriptures have not left this faith to grow merely out of the stock of injunction, exhortation or command; the inspired writers have not merely expatiated on its beauty as a grace, on its necessity as a duty, on its use as an instrument, but having infused it as a living and governing principle, have fortified their exhortations with instances the most striking, have illustrated their definitions with examples the most impressive.

The most indefatigable but rational champion of faith is the Apostle Paul. He every where demonstrates, that it is not a speculative dogma remaining dormant in the mind, but a lively conviction of the power and goodness of God, and of his mercy in Christ Jesus; a principle received into the heart, acknowledged by the understanding, and operating on the practice.

Saint Paul, among the other sacred authors, seems to consider that faith is to the soul, what the senses are to the body; it is spiritual sight. God is the object, faith is the visual ray. Christ is the substance, faith is the hand which lays hold on it. By faith the promises are in a manner substantiated. Our Saviour does not say, 'he that believeth on me *shall have life*, but *has* life.' It is not a blessing, of which the fruition is wholly reserved for heaven: in a spiritual sense, through faith the promise becomes performance, and assurance possession. The immortal seed is not only sown, but already sprung up in the soil of the renewed heart. The life of grace becomes the same in nature and quality with the life of glory, to which it leads. And if in this ungenial climate the plant will not attain its maturity, at least its progress intimates that it will terminate in absolute perfection.

In that valuable epitome of Old Testament nography, the eleventh of Hebrews, Paul defines faith to be a future but inalienable possession. He then exhibits the astonishing effects of faith displayed in men like ourselves, by marshalling the worthies who lived under the ancient economy, as actual evidences of the verity of this Divine principle; a principle which he thus, by numberless personifications, vindicates from the charge of being nothing more than an abstract notion, a visionary, unproductive conceit, or an imaginary enthusiastic feeling. He combats this opinion by exhibiting characteristically the rich and the abundant harvest, springing from this prolific principle. On these illustrious examples our limits will not permit us to dwell; one or two instances must suffice.

The patriarchal father of the faithful, against hope believed in hope. Natural reliance, reasonable expectation, common experience, all were against him. From all these impediments he averted his eyes; he raised them to Him who had promised. Though the promise was so great as to seem incredible, his confidence in Omnipotence overbalanced all his apprehensions of any hindrances. With the eye of faith he not only saw his offspring as if immediately granted, but all the myriads which should hereafter descend from him. He saw the great anticipated blessing; he saw 'the star come out of Jacob,'—'the sceptre rises out of Israel.' Though an exclamation of wonder escaped him, it was astonishment untinctured with distrust; he disregarded second causes; difficulties disappeared, impossibilities vanished, faith was victorious.

In this glorious catalogue of those who conquered by faith, there is perhaps not one who offers a more appropriate lesson to the higher classes of society than the great legislator of Israel. Here is a man sitting at ease in his possessions, enjoying the sweets of plenty, the dignity of rank, the luxuries of literature, the distinction of reputation. All these he voluntarily renounces; he foregoes the pomps of a court, the advantages of a city, then the most learned in the world; he relinquishes the delights of polished society: refused to be called the grandson of a potent monarch; chooses rather to suffer affliction with his believing brethren than to enjoy the temporary pleasures which a sinful connivance could have obtained for him: he esteems the reproach of Christ,—a Saviour unborn till many ages after, unknown but to the eye of faith,—greater than all the treasures of Egypt. The accomplished, the learned, and the polite, will be best able to appreciate the value of such a sacrifice. Does it not seem to come more home to the bosoms of the elegant and opulent; and to offer an instruction more intimate perhaps than is bequeathed even by those martial and heroic spirits who subdued kingdoms, quenched the violence of fire, stopped the mouths of lions, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens? These are instances of faith, which, if more sublime, are still of less special application. Few are now called to these latter sufferings, but many in their measure and degree to the other. May they ever bear in mind that Moses sustained his trials only *as seeing him who is invisible!*

To change the heart of a sinner is a higher exertion of power than to create a man or even a world; in the latter case, as God made it out of nothing, so there was nothing to resist the operation; but in the former he has to encounter not inanity, but repulsion: not an unobtrusive vacuity, but a powerful counteraction; and to *believe* in the Divine energy which effects this renovation, is a greater exercise of faith than to

believe that the Spirit of God, moving on the face of the waters, was the efficient cause of creation.

In producing this moral renovation God has to subdue, not only the rebel in arms against the king, but 'the little state of man,' in arms against himself, fighting against his convictions, refusing the redemption wrought for him. Almighty goodness has the two-fold work of providing pardon for offenders, and making them willing to receive it. To offer heaven and then to prevail on man to accept it, is at once an act of God's omnipotence, and of his mercy.

Thus faith, which appears to be so easy, is of all things the most difficult:—which seems to be so common, is of all things most rare. To consider how reluctant the human heart adopts this principle; how it evades and stipulates; how it procrastinates, even when it does not pointedly reject; how ingenious its subterfuges, how specious its pretences; and then to deny that faith is a supernatural gift, is to reject the concurring testimony of reason, of Scripture, of daily observation, of actual experience.

St. Paul frequently intimates that faith is never a solitary attribute: he never separates it from humility, it being indeed the parent of that self-abasing grace. He also implies that faith is not, as some represent it, a disorderly, but a regulating principle, when he speaks of *the law of faith*, of the obedience of faith. Faith and repentance are the two qualities inseparably linked in the work of our salvation; repentance teaching us to abhor ourselves for sin,—faith, to go out of ourselves for righteousness. Holiness and charity Paul exhibits as its inseparable concomitants, or rather its necessary productions, their absence clearly demonstrating the want of the generating principle. May we not hence infer that wherever faith is seen not in his company, she is an impostor.

Of the great 'mysteries of godliness' enumerated by Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, he shows by his arrangement of the five particulars that compose them, that *God believed on in the world* is the climax of this astonishing process.'* And it may be deduced from his general writings that the reason why so many do not more anxiously labour for eternal happiness, is, because they do not practically believe it. The importance of this fundamental principle is so great, that our spiritual enemy is not so perseveringly bent on deterring us from this duty, or detaching us from that virtue, as on shaking the foundation of our faith. He knows if he can undermine this strong hold, slighter impediments will give way. As the first practical instance of human rebellion sprung from unbelief, so all subsequent obedience, to be available, must spring from faith.

Saint Paul shows faith to be a *victorious* principle. There is no other quality which can enable us to overcome the world. Faith is the only successful competitor with secular allurement. The world offers things great in human estimation, but it is the property of this grace to make great things look little; it effects this purpose by reducing them to their real dimensions. Nothing but faith can show us the emptiness of this world's glory at the best, because nothing else views it in perpetual contrast with the blessedness of heaven; nothing else can give us such a feeling conviction of its brevity at the longest, as that principle which habitually measures it with eternity. It holds out the only light which shows a Christian that the universe has no bribe worth his acceptance, if it must be obtained at the price of his conscience, at the risk of his soul.

Saint Paul demonstrates in his own instance, that faith is not only a regulating and conquering, but a *transforming* grace. It altered the whole constitution of his mind. It did not dry up the tide of his strong affections, but diverted them into a channel entirely different. To say all in a word, he was a living exemplification of the great Scripture doctrine which he taught —faith made him, emphatically, *a new man*. Thus his life as well as his writings prove that faith is an *operating* principle, a strenuous, influential, vigilant grace. If it teach that self-abasement which makes us lowly in our own eyes, it communicates that watchfulness which preserves us from the contamination of sin, a dread of every communication which may pollute. Its disciple is active as well as humble. Love is the instrument by which it works. But that love of God with which it fills the heart, is not maintained there in indolent repose, but quickened for the service of man. Genuine faith does not infuse a piety which is unprofitable to others, but draws it out in incessant desires and aims to promote the general good.

The Apostle knew that the faith of many is rather drowsy than insincere, rather slothful than hypocritical; that they dread the consequences it involves more than the profession it requires. He is therefore always explicit, always mindful to append the effect to the cause. Hence we hear so much from him and the other apostles of the *fruits* of faith, of adding to faith *virtue:* and it is worthy of remark, that in the roll of Saints,—those spirits of renown in the ancient church, to which allusion has been made, —the faith of every one is illustrated, not only by some splendid act, but by a life of obedience.

We may talk as holily as Paul himself, and by a delusion not uncommon, by the very holiness of our talk, may deceive our own souls; but we may rest assured that where charity is not the dominant grace, faith is not the inspiring principle. Thus, by examining our lives, not our discourse, we shall 'prove whether we are in faith.'

Though a genuine faith is peremptory in its decision and resolute in its obedience, yet it deeply feels the source from whence it is derived. In that memorable instance of Abraham's faith, in the very act, instead of valuing himself on the strength of his conviction, *he gave glory to God;* and it is obvious that the reason why faith is selected as the prime condition of our justification, is, because it is a grace which, beyond all others, gives to God the entire glory; that it is the only attribute which subducts nothing for, derives nothing from self. Why are christian and believer convertible terms, if this living principle be no ground-work of his character. If, then,

* 1 Tim. chap. ii.

it supplies his distinguishing appellation, should it not be his governing spirit of action?

Paul is a wonderful instance of the power of this principle. That he should be so entirely carried out of his natural character; that he who, by his persecuting spirit, courted the favour of the intolerant Sanhedrim, should be brought to act in direct opposition to their prejudices, supported by no human protection, sustained alone by the grace of Him whom he had stoutly opposed; that his confidence in God should rise in proportion to his persecutions from man: that the whole bent of his soul should be set directly contrary to his natural propensities, the whole force of his mind and actions be turned in full opposition to his temper, education, society, and habits; that not only his affections should be diverted into a new channel, but that his judgment and understanding should sail in the newly directed current; that his bigotry should be transformed into candour, his fierceness into gentleness, his untameable pride into charity, his intolerance into meekness,—can all this be accounted for on any principle inherent in human nature, on any principle uninspired by the Spirit of God?

After this instance,—and, blessed be God, the instance, though superior, is not solitary; the change, though miraculous in this case, is not less certain in others,—shall the doctrine so exemplified continue to be the butt of ridicule? While the scoffing infidel virtually puts the renovation of the human heart nearly on a footing with the metamorphoses of Ovid, or the transmigrations of Pythagoras; let not the timid Christian be discouraged: let not his faith be shaken, though he may find that the principle to which he has been taught to trust his eternal happiness, is considered as false by him who has not examined into its truth; that the change, of which the sound believer exhibits so convincing an evidence, is derided as absurd by the philosophical sceptic, treated as chimerical by the superficial reasoner, or silently suspected as incredible by the decent moralist.

CHAP. V.

The morality of Saint Paul.

Christianity was a second creation. It completed the first order of things, and introduced a new one of its own, not subversive but perfective of the original. It produced an entire revolution in the condition of man, and accomplished a change in the state of the world, which all its confederated power, wit, and philosophy, not only could not effect, but could not even conceive. It threw such a preponderating weight into the scale of morals, by the superinduction of the new principle of faith in a Redeemer, as rendered the hitherto insupportable trials of the afflicted, comparatively light. It gave strength to weakness, spirit to action, motive to virtue, certainty to doubt, patience to suffering, light to darkness, life to death.

It is a rule of Aristotle, that principles and conclusions must always be within the sphere of the same science; that error will be inevitable, while men examine the conclusions of one science by the principles of another. He observes, that it is therefore absurd for a mathematician, whose conclusions ought to be grounded on demonstration, to ground them on the probabilities of the rhetorician.

May not this rule be transferred from the sciences of the schools to the science of morals? Will not the worldly moralist err, by drawing his conclusions as to the morality of a serious Christian from the principles of the worldly school; not being at all able to judge of the principles, of which the religious man's morals are the result.

But in our application of this rule, the converse of the proposition will not hold good; for the real Christian, being aware of the principles of worldly morality, expects that his conclusions should grow out of his principles, and in this opinion he seldom errs.

Christian writings have made innumerable converts to morality; but mere moral works have never made one convert to religion. They do not exhibit an originating principle. Morality is not the instrument but the effect of conversion. It cannot say, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' But when Christ has given life, then morality, by the activity of the inspiring motive, gives the surest evidence of renovated vitality, and exhibits the most unequivocal symptoms, not only of spiritual life, but of vigorous health.

Saint Paul is sometimes represented not merely as the greatest of the Apostles,—this is readily granted,—but virtually as being almost exclusively great. Is not this just ascription of superior excellence, however, too commonly limited to the doctrinal part of his compositions, and is not the consummate moral perfection which both his writings and his character so consistently display, sometimes, if not overlooked, yet placed in the back ground?

Though he did more for the moral accomplishment of the human character than has ever been effected by any other man; though he laboured more abundantly than any other writer, to promote practical religion; yet polemical divinity on the one side, is too much disposed to claim him as her immediate champion; and then in order to make good her claim on the other, to assign to him a subordinate station in the ranks of sacred and moral writers.

Now the fact is, that all the prophets and apostles, aggregately, are not so abundant in ethical instruction, nor is the detail of moral conduct in any of them so minutely unfolded, or so widely ramified, as in the works of Saint Paul. We may indeed, venture to assert, that David and our apostles are almost the only Scripture characters, of whom we have such full-length pictures. And for this reason; what was left imperfect in their delineation by their respective historians, is completely filled up by their own compositions. The narratives may be said to exhibit their shape and features; their own writings have added the grace of countenance, the force of expression, and the warmth of colouring

It furnishes a complete answer to those who oppose the doctrines of grace, on the supposed ground of their encouraging sin; that as there never was a man who expanded and illustrated those doctrines so fully, so there never was one whose character and compositions exhibit a more consistent and high-toned morality.

Like his sacred precursors, Paul always equally maintains the freeness of grace, and the necessity of holiness. The character of faith is not lowered by insisting that holy practice, which is nothing more than the exercises and consequences of faith, is the sign of its reality. Action, and motion, and speech are not life, but they are the most unequivocal signs of life. Life evidences itself in them; and we do not disparage the principle when we infer its effects, and estimate their value.

We sometimes hear in conversation Saint James set up as the champion of moral virtue against Saint Paul, the bold asserter of doctrines. For these two eminent apostles, there has been invented an opposition, which, as it never existed in their minds, so it cannot be traced in their writings. Without detracting from the perfect ethics of Saint James, may we not be allowed to insist, that Paul, his coadjutor, not his rival, is equally zealous in the inculcation of practice; only running it up more uniformly into its principle; descending more deeply into its radical stock, connecting it more invariably with its motive. It is worth observing, in confirmation of their similarity of views, and perfect agreement in sentiment, that Saint Paul and Saint James derive their instance of the principle for which each is contending, from the same example, the patriarch Abraham.

So far is Paul from undervaluing virtue, that he expressly declares 'that God will render to every man according to his deeds.' So peremptory on this head, that he not only directs men to do good works, but to 'maintain' them; so desirous to establish the act into a habit, that they must not only perform them, but be 'careful' in the performance; so far from thinking, that, after his conversion, man was to be an inactive recipient of grace, that he not only enjoins us to be 'always abounding in the work of the Lord,' but assigns the very reason for it—the reception of grace; 'forasmuch as ye know that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord.' He repeatedly presses on them perseverance, and perseverance is no fanatical symptom. His documents enforce a religion equable, consistent, progressive. This mode of instruction is no fruit of a heated brain, no child of emotion, no vapour of impulse, no effect of fancy.

Not to instance those ample tables of Christian practice, the twelfth of Romans, the fifth of Thessalonians, the whole Epistle of Titus, and the two last chapters to the Ephesians,—every part of his writings either deduces holy practice from some corresponding principle; or else, after he has been enforcing a system of doctrine, he habitually infers a system of morals growing out of it, inseparable from it. Indeed, throughout the whole of the last named Epistle, into which the very essence of Gospel doctrines is infused and compressed, all the social, personal, and relative duties are specifically detailed and enjoined:—the affection of husbands, the submission of wives, the tenderness of parents, the obedience of children, the subordination and fidelity of servants, economy of time, hands to be kept from stealing, 'a tongue from evil speaking,' a body maintained in 'temperance, soberness, and chastity;' a guarded conversation, a gravity of carriage; the very decencies of life are all proposed with a minuteness which will scarcely bear a comparison but with his own catalogue of virtues in a kindred Epistle: 'Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'

So far from seeking to subvert the moral law, he takes unwearied pains to confirm it: but he fixes it on its true basis; while he denies its justifying power, he 'establishes' its importance as a rule. He vindicates its value, not as a covenant for salvation, but as a measure of conduct. In no instance, however light, does he deny the obligation of believers to maintain a steadfast adherence to it, or discountenance, a minute observance of it. He not only shows that every sin is to be abandoned, but the contrary virtue adopted: and, though one of the fathers observes, that 'a vice sometimes gives place where a virtue does not take it,' yet the only certain symptom of the expulsion of a bad quality is the substitution of its opposite. And no man ever more forcibly condemned an empty profession than Paul: no one more severely reprobated a dead faith, no one more unequivocally commended 'not the hearers, but the doers of the law.'

He proves unanswerably that the doctrine of grace is so far from being hostile to sound practice, that it is the only source from which all legitimate virtue springs;—so far from slackening diligence, that it gives vigour to its activity;—so far from making vigilance superfluous, that its constant language is, *Watch;*—so far from limiting to a favoured few the exhortation, that it makes it universal; 'What I say unto you, I say unto *all*—watch!'

In directing his converts to virtuous deeds, he never fails to include the spirit in the act;—they must be *ready* to distribute, *willing* to communicate. He never fails to show, that the characteristic and essence of all goodness is the desire of pleasing God. In other words, the action must be the fruit of love to Him. Qualities *merely amiable* are originally without that principle, and possessed even by animals, and possessed in a very high degree, as affection for their offspring, fidelity to their masters, gratitude for notice.

Paul, like his blessed Lord, is never so emphatically indignant against any of the signs of hypocrisy in professors, as against sinful practice. Like Him he is frequent in the enumeration of vices which he solemnly proclaims amount to an exclusion from heaven. Holy practice is indeed the only sign to the world of the sincerity of a Christian, and in a good measure is a sign to himself. It is the principal evidence which will regulate the retributive sentence of the last day.—Paul therefore

calls that day 'the *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God.' He does not call it the day of his forming the judgment, but of his declaring it. God, who witnessed the act when it was done, and the motive which impelled it, wants himself no such evidence to assist his decision, but he uses it to manifest to men and angels his own strict justice. 'In that awful day,' says an eminent divine, 'the judge will not examine men as to their experiences, he will not set every one to tell the story of his conversion, but he will bring forth his works.'*

How acceptable, even in the ears of the most thoughtless, would that proclamation sound, *the grace of God bringeth salvation*, were it unaccompanied by the moral power ascribed to it, that of teaching us to deny our sensual appetites! How many would give a cheap assent to the principle, were it not clogged with such an encumbering consequence. Those who insist, that our salvation is effected by works, would gladly adopt faith as a speculative notion, instead of the inconvenient evidences which this self-denying grace involves.

One would imagine, that some who so loudly insist that we shall be saved by works, must mean works of supererogation, and that they depended for salvation on the transfer of the superfluity of the merits of others to themselves; for it is remarkable, that *they* trust their future bliss most confidently to good works, who have the slenderest portion of their own to produce.

The Apostle is perpetually combating the fatal doctrine of those who insinuate that the freedom of the Gospel is a freedom from moral restraint. He describes it, indeed, as a deliverance from the sentence, but not from the precepts, of the law. No one ever more unremittingly opposed those who represent the constant inculcation of holy practice as an infringement of the liberty of a Christian. He perpetually demonstrates the necessity of a determinate rule of duty, without which even that love, which is sometimes pleaded as an apology for the neglect of duty,—that love, which is, indeed, the genuine source of all acceptable performance,—might be lowered into a vagrant, indefinite, disorderly principle. A religion, destitute of faith and love, is not the religion of Christ: a religion which furnishes no certain standard of conduct, is not the religion of the Gospel.

Saint Paul accordingly animadverts severely on those who presume to convert the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, into a pretence for licentious conduct. He strenuously refutes the charge, by intimating, that the New Covenant enforces holiness of life, even more than the Old, and enforces it on more engaging motives. The Law deters from sin by denunciations: the Gospel invites to goodness by the most winning persuasions; God so *loved* the world, that he gave his Son to save it. The Law shows man the danger of sin, and pronounces its punishment: the Gospel performs the higher act of love, it delivers him from its power. It is a quality ascribed to the love of Christ, that it 'constraineth;' it compels us, as it were, to be compassionate. What can make us so tender to others as the experience of God's goodness to ourselves? Who is so ready to show mercy as he who has received it?

Saint Paul derives all duties from this love of God in Christ as their foundation. All the motives to right action, all the arguments for holiness of life, are drawn from this source; all the lines of duty converge to this centre. If Paul censures, he points to this only spring of hope; if he laments, he turns to this only true consolation; if he insists that the *Grace of God hath appeared*, he points to its practical object, 'teaching us to live soberly, righteously, and godly.' When he determines to know nothing but his Saviour, and even him under the degrading circumstance of crucifixion, he includes in that knowledge all the religious and moral benefits of which it is susceptible.

They who contend that the Gospel is only a scheme of morals, struggle hard to keep down the compact to their own depressed standard. They will not allow of a grain or a scruple 'beyond the bond,' but insist, that whatever is not specifically commanded, is superfluous; what is above their own pitch is unnecessary. If they allow that it is sublime, they insist that it is impracticable. If they allow that the *love*, *peace*, and *joy* of the apostle, are desirable, they do not desire them as *fruits of the Spirit*, as signs of acceptance. The interior principle, those views which take in the very depths of the heart, as well as the surface of life,—any practical use of these penetrating truths, they consider as something which the enthusiastic reader does not find, but make.

The mere social and political virtues are made for this world. Here they have their origin, their use, and their reward. All the motives to various practice, not derived from the hope of future blessedness, will be inefficient. There is a powerful obligation to 'perfect holiness' to those who do not perfect it in the fear 'of God.' Grace will not thrive abundantly in that heart which does not believe it to be the seat of glory.

The moralist of our Apostle is not merely a man possessed of agreeable qualities, of some social and civil virtues, of generosity and good nature, qualities excellent as far as they go, and which, as a means to the good order of society, can scarcely be too much valued; but these qualities a man may possess, without having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, without desiring 'to live for him who died for him.' Such qualities will gain him credit, but that very credit may endanger his salvation, if worldly esteem make him rest satisfied, without the 'honour which cometh from God.' The purity, sublimity, and consistency of Saint Paul's requirements every where manifest that his moral man is not merely a disciple of Antoninus or Epictetus, but a liege subject of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom.

Paul shows, that the humbling doctrines of the Cross are so far from lowering the tone of moral obligation, that they raise the standard of practical virtue to an elevation totally unknown under any other mode of instruction. But there is a tendency in the heart of man, in his natural state, to rebel against these doctrines, even while he professes himself an ad-

* Edwards on Religious Affections.

vocate for virtue; to set up the virtue which he presumes that he possesses, against religion, to which he is chiefly hostile for the very elevation which it gives to virtue: this, more than the doctrines, and even than the mysteries of revelation, is the real cause of his hostility.

We have known persons, when pressed on the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, think to get rid of the argument, by declaring that they did not pretend to understand Saint Paul; that, for their part, they were quite satisfied with Micah's religion: 'To do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God,' was enough for them. In what they call this comfortable, and reasonable, and practicable scheme of religion, they are little aware what strictness is involved, what integrity, what charity, what holiness. They little think how nearly the Prophet's religion approached that of the Apostle. There is in fact no difference between them, but such as necessarily arises out of the two dispensations under which they lived. To walk humbly with God, we must believe in the revelation of his Son, and consequently adopt the principle he enjoins: we must adopt every doctrine, and believe every mystery. To walk humbly with God, is a principle which stretches to the bounds of the whole universe of revelation.

More men are indebted to Christianity for their morality, than are willing to confess the obligation. It communicates a secret and unacknowledged infection. Living under a public recognition of Christianity, under Christian laws, and in Christian society, causes many a proud heart to believe more than it cares to own, and to do more good than the man is willing to ascribe to the faith which, if it does not actually influence *his* mind, has made right actions so common, that not to do them is dishonourable. Others, who do not appear to live under the direct illumination of the Gospel, have yet the benefit of its refracted rays, which, if the conveyance is too imperfect to communicate religious warmth, yet diffuses sufficient light to point the way to many moral duties.

We are apt to call men good, because they are without certain bad qualities. But this is not only not knowing religion, it is not knowing human nature. All vices are not affinities; of course the very indulgence of one vice is not seldom an exclusion of another, as covetousness avoids profligacy, and ambition expels indolence; but though they are natural antipathies, they all spring from the same source; the same fountain of corrupt nature feeds both.

Nor does the goodness of Saint Paul's moral man consist merely in abstaining from wicked actions; nor merely in filling the external duties of his profession. While he is active in business, he must be fervent in Spirit. While transacting the ordinary affairs of life, he must be serving the Lord. In worldly moralists, the excessive pursuit of business, as well as of pleasure, leaves a clinging to it in the thoughts, and almost exclusive attachment to it in the heart, long after the actual engagement has ceased, the hankering mind continues to act over again the scenes of its interest, of its ambition, or of its amusement.

Again, the worldly moralist, while he practises some virtues, is indifferent to others. He is temperate, perhaps, but he is ambitious. He is diligent, but he is sordid. Whereas Christian morality as taught by St. Paul hangs as it were in clusters; every virtue issuing from *his* principles touches on other virtues at so many points, that no man possesses one in perfection who does not possess many, who does not at least desire to possess all; while the Divine Spirit, pervading like the sap every fibre of the soul, strengthens the connexion of its graces, and infuses holy aims into the whole character.

We have employed the term *morality* in compliance with common usage; but adopted in the worldly sense, it gives but an imperfect idea of the Apostle's meaning. His preceptive passages are encircled with a kind of glory; they are illuminated with a beam from heaven; they proceed from the Spirit of God, are produced by faith in Him. There is every where that beautiful intermixture of motive and action, that union of the cause and the effect, the faith and its fruits, that uniform balance of the principle and the produce, which render these Epistles an exhaustless treasury of practical wisdom, as well as an imperishable record of Divine Grace.

Saint Paul every where runs up the stream to the spring. The government he inculcates is spiritual. Not content to recommend the obedience of the life, he brings the very thoughts and desires under controul. He traces up the act to the temper which produces it. He dwells more on the spirit of the world than on its actual offences. He knew that many would reprobate bad actions, who do not seek that spirit which would prevent their generating. He knew that men judge soundly enough on questions in which they have no bias from interest or appetite. For one who believes that to be 'carnally-minded is death,' twenty believe in the miraculous gift of tongues, and even in the doctrine of the Trinity, because they fancy, that neither of these trenches on their purse, or their pleasure, or their vain projects.

What Paul calls 'doing by nature the things contained in the law,' and 'a man being a law unto himself,' we frequently see illustrated in some well bred and highly cultivated minds. They have a strong sense of honour and integrity; to this sense their credit and their comfort require they should live up. The natural make of their mind, perhaps, is liberal; from education they have imbibed noble sentiments: they have adopted a system of equity which they would think it dishonourable to violate; they are generous and humane; but in matters of self-indulgence they are not scrupulous; in subduing their inclinations, in abstinence from some one governing desire or impetuous appetite,—in all this they come short; to all this their rule does not extend. Their conduct, therefore, though amiable, and useful, and creditable, yet is not the 'obedience of faith;' these good qualities might have been exercised, had Christianity never existed; this is not bringing the practice, much less *the thoughts, into the captivity of Christ.* This man is a law unto himself, and acts consistently enough with this self-imposed legislation.

Even if no religion had ever existed, if a

Deity did not exist,—for the reference is not to religion, not to the will of the Deity,—such morality would be acceptable to society, because to society it is profitable. But how can action be pleasing to God in which there is no purpose of blessing him? How can any conduct be acceptable to God, to whom it renders no homage, to whom it gives no glory?

Scripture abounds with every motive to obedience, both rational and spiritual. But it would achieve but half its work, had it stopped there. As peaceable creatures, we require not only inducements to obedience, but a heart, and a power, and a will to obey; assistance is as necessary as motives; power as indispensable as precept;—all which requisites are not only promised by the word, but conferred by the Spirit of God.

CHAP. VI.

The Disinterestedness of Saint Paul.

The perfection of the Christian character does not so much consist in this excellence, or that talent, or the other virtue; in the performance of some right action, or the abstinence from some wrong one, as in *the determination of the whole soul for God.* This generous surrender of self, whether of the sensual or of the intellectual self is the unequivocal test of a heart consecrated by man to his Maker. He has no bye-ends, no secret reserves. His intention is single, his way is straightforward; he keeps his end in view without deflection, and he pursues it without weariness.

Saint Paul and his associates were the first moral instructors who preached not themselves. Perhaps there is scarcely a more striking proof of the grandeur of his spirit, than his indifference to popularity. This is an elevation of character, which not only no Pagan sage has reached, but which not every Christian teacher has been found to attain.

This successful apostle was so far from placing himself at the head of a sect, that he took pains to avoid it. In some subsequent instructors, this vanity was probably the first seed of heresy; the sound of Ebionites and Marcionites would as much gratify the ear of the founders, as bringing over proselytes to their opinions would delight their feelings. Paul would have rejected with horror any such distinction. He who earnestly sought to glorify his Master, would naturally abase himself. With a holy indignation he asks, 'What then is Paul, and what is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?' He points out to them the littleness of such exclusive fondness in men, who had such great objects in view—'overvalue not Paul or Apollos as yours, *for all things are yours.*'

It is impossible not to stop a moment, in order to notice the fine structure of the period to which these words are an introduction. It would be difficult to find a more finished climax: 'Let no man glory in men; for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; or the world, or life, or death; or things present or things to come; all are yours, and your are Christ's and Christ is God's.*

Knowing the proneness of human nature to this party spirit, he takes pains to prevent excessive individual attachments. There is no instance of a man so distinguished, so little distinguishing himself. He chooses to merge himself in the general cause, to sink himself in the mass of faithful ministers.—This is particularly evident in the beginning of many of his Epistles, by his humility in attaching, to his own, some name of far inferior note, as his associate in the work;—'Paul and Sosthenes'—'Paul and Sylvanus'—'Timotheus our brother;'—and in writing to the Thessalonians, he connects both the latter names with his own.

He laboured to make the people bear in mind that the apostles were the disseminators, not the authors, of the faith which they preached. Miraculous as his conversion had been, superior as were his endowments, favoured as he was by Divine inspiration, he not only did not assume, but he rejected, any distinction, and only included himself among the teachers of their common Christianity. Thus he bequeathed to his successors a standing pattern of humility, and of the duty of ascribing their talents, their application, and their success, to him, from whom whatever advantages they possess, are derived.

Saint Paul did not rank, on the one hand, with those liberal modern philosophers, who assert that virtue is its own reward; nor on the other, with those abstracted mystics, who profess an unnatural disinterestedness, and a superhuman disdain of any recompence but that which they find in the pure love of God. He was not above accepting heaven, not for any works of righteousness which he had done, but as the free gift of God through the righteousness that had been wrought for him. He was not too proud and independent to confess, that the nearness of heavenly glory was with him a most animating principle.

This hope cheered his fainting spirit; this prospect not only regulated, but almost annihilated his sense of suffering. Invisible things were made so clear to the eye of faith; remote things were brought so near to one, who always kept up in his mind a comparative estimate of the brevity of this afflicted life, and the duration of eternal happiness; faith so made the future present; love so made the labour light; the earnest of the Spirit was given him in such a measure;—that mortality seemed, even here, to be swallowed up of life. His full belief in the immediate presence of God in that world in which he was assured, that light, purity, holiness, and happiness would be enjoyed in their most consummate perfection, not only sustained his hope, but exhilirated his heart.

If it does not support *us* under our inferior trials in the same manner, it is because we have rather a nominal than a practical faith, rather an assenting than an obeying conviction; it is because our eyes are not fixed on the same objects, nor our hearts warmed with the same affections; it is because our attention is directed so sparingly to that Being, and that state, to

* 1 Corinth. iii. 22

which his was supremely devoted. Ought we to complain, that we enjoy not the same supports, nor the same consolations, while we do not put ourselves in the same way to obtain them?

But though Paul was no disciple of that metaphysical theology, which makes such untaught distinctions, as to separate our love of God from any regard to our own beatitude; though he might have been considered a selfish man, by either of the classes to whom allusion has been made, yet true disinterestedness was eminently his characteristic. Another instance of a human being so entirely devoid of selfishness, one who never took his own ease, or advantage, or safety, or credit, into the account, cannot be found. If he considered his own sufferings, he considered them for the sake of his friends. 'Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation.' The only joy he seemed to derive, when he was 'pressed out of measure, above strength,' was, that others might be comforted and encouraged by his sufferings. So also of his consolations; the principal joy which he derived from them was, that others might be animated by them. This anxiety for the proficiency of his converts, in preference to his own safety; his disposition to regard every object in due subjection to the great design of his ministry; his humble, vigilant care, while exulting in the hope of an eternal crown, that he might 'not himself be cast away;'—form, in combination with the rest of his conduct, a character which we must allow has not only no superior, but no parallel.

The union of generosity and self-denial,—and without the one the other is imperfect,—was peculiarly exemplified in our apostle.—His high-minded independence on man had nothing of the monkish pride of povorty, for he knew 'how to abound;' nor was it the worldly pusillanimous dread of it, for he 'knew how to want.'

In vindicating the right of the ecclesiastical body to an equitable provision, as a just requital of their labours, he nobly renounces all claim to any participation for himself.—'*I have used none of these things!*' This wise and dignified abstinence in the original formation of a church, which must be founded, before provision can be made for its continuance, while it maintained the dignity of his own disinterestedness, enabled him with the better grace, and more powerful effect, to plead the legitimate claims of her ministers; and to insist, that it was the duty of the people to supply their temporal things to those from whom they received ther spiritual things. While he himself refused to claim them, lest it should be made a pretence for hindering the Gospel, he yet looked forward with an eye of kindness and justice, in thus stipulating, as it were, for the comfort of the Christian ministors to the end of the world.

In a long expostulatory argument, illustrated by a variety of analogous instances, he shows the propriety of a provision being made for those who dedicated themselves to the spiritual instruction of others:—the warrior engaged in the defence of his country is supported at the public expense; the planter by the produce of his vineyard; the feeder of a flock by the milk of his flock; the agriculturist by the profits of his plough.

He strengthens his argument by an allusion to a humane practice in the old law, by which even the ox was allowed to participate in that plenty which his labour assisted to procure; then, by a sudden generous interjection,—'Doth God take care for oxen?' he intimates that this provision of mercy for the beast, was emblematical of this justice,—for it scarcely amounted to mercy,—which ought to secure to every minister a fair remuneration for the sacrifice he has made of ease and profit, by addicting himself to the service of the altar.

After, however, having declared that he renounced all reward for himself, fearing that this assurance might be construed into an insinuation of his wish to receive the emolument which he pretended to refuse, with a noble disdain of so mean an expedient, he protests that it would be better for him to die of want, rather than, by receiving pecuniary recompence, to rob himself of his honest claim to the consciousness of dis interested services.

Saint Paul's conduct in these instances affords something of the same fine climax in action, with that which Jesus expressed in words, when he sent to the Baptist the proofs of his divinity. After enumerating his miracles of love, he closes with declaring, as the highest possible instance of that love, *that the Gospel was preached*—but to what class? to the poor! From the words of Christ, turn to the life of Paul. The persecution of his enemies, the fatigue of his travels, the falsehood of his brethren, the labour of instructing so many nations, of converting so many cities, of founding so many churches,—what is his relaxation from such labours, what his refreshment from such perils, what his descent from such heights?—Working with his own hands for his daily bread, and for the relief of the poor. The profane critic may call this the art of sinking, the Christian will deem it the noblest point of elevation. Might not the apostle well say, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ?'

How has the world stood in just admiration of the generous conduct of Cincinnatus! Tired with the fatigues of war, and satiated with the glories of conquest, he very rationally, and (as he refused all reward) it must be owned very disinterestedly, withdrew to his country house, from which he had been reluctantly torn. He withdrew to enjoy, in the bosom of his family, the advantages of agriculture and the pleasures of retirement. To such a retreat would Paul have flown with delight, had he not known that, for him it was not a duty. He, unlike the Dictator, had no intervals of unmolested claim; it was not in the quiet of repose, but in the very midst of perils and of persecutions, that he laboured for his own support.

It cannot be denied, that his whole consistent practice furnished this sure criterion of a faithful minister,—that he enjoined no self-denial, preached no mortification, recommended no exertion to others, of which he gave not himself a shining example. While he pointed out to his associates the duty of 'approving themselves ministers of God in afflictions, in necessities, in

distresses,' he was not himself *lying on a bed of roses;* he was not making light of sorrows, of which he was not personally partaking; he did not deal out orders for the patient endurance of sufferings the bitterness of which he had not tasted. He had largely shared in the stripes and imprisonments which it was possible some of his followers might be speedily called to endure.

At the same time, he furnishes them with cautions drawn from his own invariable prudence, when he exhorted them to *give no offence.* This was not altogether to avoid personal discredit, though that should be carefully guarded against, so much as to preserve the character of religion itself from the obloquy she would sustain from the faults of her disciples. His great object why *the ministry should not be blamed,* was because he knew how ineffectual all teaching would be rendered, if the teacher committed the faults he reprehended, or even exercised a religious vocation in an imprudent manner.

In another place, after recapitulating some of the hardships which himself and his companions were suffering, up to the very moment when he was describing them,—their hunger and thirst, their nakedness and buffeting, deprived of domestic comforts, destitute of a settled home; having shown what was their treatment, he proceeds to show what was their temper under it: —*Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat.* This is indeed practical Christianity!

After enumerating the trials to which they may be exposed, he sets over against them a catalogue of the qualities by which they should be distinguished,—*pureness, knowledge, kindness;* thus encouraging them to patience by the integrity of their motives; and to the adornment of their calling, by the skilfulness and affection with which they exercised it He tempers their sorrows and difficulties, by interspersing with the recital those Divine consolations, from which alone genuine cheerfulness can be derived.

In this enumeration he had not to rack his invention for precedents; he had only to make a transcript of the state of his own mind, and the tenor of his own practice, to give them a complete delineation of the ministerial character. While he encourages them to perseverance by the success which might attend their labours, he prepares them also to expect reproach; mingling *good and evil report* as the probable lot of every devoted servant of Christ.

When he was setting out from Ephesus for Jerusalem, 'bound in the spirit, not knowing the things that should befal him,' the indefinite yet certain anticipation of calamity which he expressed, might have been interpreted into the pusillanimous forebodings of his own apprehensive mind: he guards against this suspicion by informing us, it was by the unerring inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he was assured, 'that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city;' so that he knew infallibly, wherever he went, it was only a change of place, not of peril. Yet was this conviction so far from arresting his purpose, so far from inclining him to hesitate, or not to persist in the path of duty because it was the path of danger, that his mighty faith converted duty into choice, elevated duty into joy. Hear his triumphant proclamation: 'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.'

It is not the nature of Christianity to convert a man of sense into a driveller; if it make him self-abased in the sight of God, and in his own eyes, it does not oblige him to a renunciation of his just claims in civil society, nor to a base abjection in the sight of men. He is not desirous of honours which do not belong to him, but he does not despise those to which he has a lawful claim. The character of Paul, like the religion he taught, is manly, rational, ingenuous.

This combination of dignity with humility, he uniformly presents to us. He always humbles, but never disparages himself. He, who on one occasion was 'the least of all saints,' was, on another, 'not a whit behind the chiefest of them.' He that was 'not worthy to be called an apostle,' would yet magnify his apostleship. He who would patiently endure injury and reproach, yet refused to be scourged contrary to law. He, who was illegally imprisoned at Philippi, accepted not the deliverance till the magistrates themselves came in person to release him, —a resolution not only due to his own innocence, but probably intended also to render the magistrates afraid of proceeding unjustly against other Christians. He, who could submit to live by the labour of his own hands, and to receive charity in his sickness, would vindicate his civil title to respect, and not only urge his right of Roman citizenship, but press his peculiar ground of superiority over the officer who would have contended with him, by declaring that his own freedom was not a purchase, but an inheritance. He who determined to know nothing but 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' could assert, when it became proper, his liberal education under a master in Israel. He, who was now lying at the foot of the cross, avowed that he had been bred at the feet of Gamaliel. He who was beating down the pride of 'gifts' in the assuming Corinthians, scrupled not to declare his own superiority in this very article, yet with an exclusive ascription of the gift to the Giver. 'I thank my God, that I speak with more tongues than you all.'*

To those who understand what Bishop Horseley calls 'the paradoxes of Christianity,' it will be perfectly intelligible, that one, who was so feelingly alive to the perception of sin, as to deplore that 'when he would do good, evil was present with him,' could also, in the integrity of his heart, boldly appeal to the Thessalonians for the purity of his own conduct, and that of his companions—'you know how holily, and justly, and unblamably we have lived among you.'

He was aware that contentions about practices and opinions comparatively insignificant, were generally the most vehemently and uncharitably carried on by men who are the most cold and indifferent in the defence of truths of the most

* Acts, ch. 16.

awful moment. Inflexible himself in every thing which was of vital importance, yet accommodating in trivial matters, about which men of narrow views pertinaciously contend, he shaped the course of his usefulness to the winding current of life, and the flexure of circumstances; and was ever on the watch to see how, by giving way in things indifferent, he might gain men to the great cause which he lived only to promote.

Never was any sentiment more completely perverted, than that which is so expressive of the condescension that distinguishes his character,—*I am all things to all men.* The Latitudinarian in principle or in morals, who would not consider Paul's authority as paramount on any other occasion, eagerly pleads this text to justify his own accommodation to every thing that is tempting in interest, or seductive in appetite. This sentiment, which proceeded from a candour the most amiable, was, in the apostle, always governed by an integrity the most unbending.

To what purpose did he make use of this maxim? 'That he might by all means save some.' Let those who justify its adoption by the sanction of Paul, employ it to the same end to which he employed it. But is it not frequently carried to a conceding length, to which he would never have carried it, to answer *any* purpose; and is not the end itself often such as he would not have sought, even by the best means? To the perversion of this sentiment the fashionable doctrine of expediency may be imputed,—a doctrine not more corrupt in its principle, and dangerous in its results, than opposite to the whole bent and current of the apostles' views, as developed in his writings and in his practice.

That hollow maxim, of *doing evil that good may come*, had indeed been adopted by some of the wisest Pagan legislators. Not only the prudent Numa pretended to Divine communications with his inspiring goddess, in order that his laws might be received with more reverence; even the open hearted conqueror of Carthage used to enter the Capitol alone, under pretence of consulting the gods, that whatever enterprises he wished to recommend to the people, they might believe them to be directed and approved by their deities.—But nothing impedes the march of truth more than the offered assistance of falsehood. Nothing is more injurious to a good cause than the attempt to help it forward with fictitious or even doubtful additions. Some of the best cases,—cases corroborated by a thousand indubitable facts,—have been injured for a time, by the detection of petty instances of misrepresentation, or mistake, or aggravation in ill-judging advocates.

After the example of the illustrious Romans above recited, but with far less excuse, even some weak Christians, in the second century, fancying that deceit might succeed where truth had failed, attempted by forgery to supply the deficiencies of Scripture. Spurious Sybilline verses, under the reign of one of the Antonines, were imposed by fraud upon folly, as prophecies of Christ, pretending to be as old as the Deluge. The attempt to mend perfection never answers.

To these political impostures what a contrast does Saint Paul exhibit at once in his writings and his life!—In his writings he declares, in one short sentence, of all such principles, 'their condemnation is just.' In his life he *suffered* evil to extremity, that good might be produced; but never, under the most alluring pretence, *did* evil, or connived at it. He drew in no convert, by displaying only the pleasant side of Christianity. To bring forward the doctrine of the cross was his first object; though, since his time, to keep them out of sight has sometimes been thought a more prudent measure. But the political wisdom of the Jesuitical missionaries failed as completely as the simple integrity of the apostle succeeded.

His arguments, it is true, were powerful, his motives attractive; but he never shrunk from the avowal, that they were drawn wholly from things unseen, future, eternal. 'To you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his holy angels.' 'If we suffer with Christ, we shall be also glorified together.'—The sufferings of the present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.' And in this view he is not afraid to speak of suffering, as a favour connected with faith. It is *given* unto them, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to *suffer* for his sake.

How powerful must have been the convictions of his faith, and the integrity of his heart, which could not only conquer prejudice the most inveterate, but could lead him to renounce every prospect of riches and power, fame and distinction,—objects which were likely to have taken deep hold on a temper so fervent, a genius so active! He knew that the cause he was embracing would defeat all such expectations. He possibly might have advanced his fortune, certainly his reputation, under his Jewish masters, had he pursued those practices in which he was so hotly engaged, when he was *so exceedingly mad against the Church of God.*

What was the use which, in his new character, he made of his natural advantages? It was the same which he made of his supernatural graces. Did the one induce intellectual pride? Did the other inspire spiritual self-sufficiency? Was it his aim to exalt the accomplished preacher? Was it not his only endeavour to magnify the crucified Saviour? He sought no civil power, courted no ecclesiastical supremacy. He conferred honour on Episcopacy by ordaining bishops, but took no rank himself. He intermeddled with no party. All his interference with governments was to teach the people to obey them.

He had nothing to bias him at the time of his conversion, any more than afterwards.—He embraced Christianity when at the height of its discredit: in defending it, he was neither influenced by the obstinacy of supporting a preconceived opinion, nor the private motive of personal attachment. As he had not been a follower nor an acquaintance of Jesus, he had never been buoyed up with the hope of a place in his expected temporal kingdom. Had this been the case, mere pride and pertinacity in so strong a character might have led him to adhere to the falling cause, lest by deserting it he might

be accused of disappointment in his hopes, or pusillanimity in his temper. Was it probable then, that on any lower principle he would encounter every hazard, sacrifice every hope, annihilate every possibility of preferment, for the cause of a man, after his ignominious death, whom he had so fiercely opposed, when the danger was less alarming, and the hope less uncertain.

His strong faith was fortified by those trials which would have subdued a weak one. His zeal increased with the darkness of his earthly prospects. What were his inducements? The glory of God. What was his reward? Bonds and imprisonment. When arrived at any fresh scene of peril, did he smooth his language to secure his safety?—Did he soften an unpalatable truth to attract upon false grounds? Did he practise any artifice to swell the catalogue of his proselytes? Did he take advantage of ignorance and idolatry, when acclamations met him? Did he court popularity when he refused divine honours? Did he not prefer his Master's crown of thorns to the garlands with which the priests of Jupiter would have crowned him? Is it not observable, that this offer of deification disturbed the serenity of his spirit more than all his injuries had done?

Two remarks arise out of this circumstance. How little is popular acclamation any proof of the comparative excellence of the objects of acclaim; and how little is genuine grandeur of soul elated by it! Jesus, after all his miraculous deeds, as full of mercy as of power,—deeds repeatedly performed in his own country, and before the same spectators—never had divine honours paid him. While, for a single cure, Paul and his companions were instantly deified, though they rejected the homage with a holy indignation. Nothing could more fully prove their deep humility than that they bore the abuse and ill-treatment of the people with meekness; but when they would have worshipped them, 'they rent their clothes.'

In fine, no principle short of the faith described by our apostle in the eleventh of Hebrews, could have enabled him to sustain with such heroic firmness, the diversified sufferings alluded to in the twelfth of the second of Corinthians. Nothing short of that Divine support could have produced a disinterestedness so pure, a devotedness so sublime.

The afflictions of the saints serve to prove the distinguished character of God's favour. The grace so eminently afforded to this apostle neither exempted him from sorrow, nor suffering, nor dangers, nor calumny, nor poverty, nor a violent death. That its results were in the opposite direction shows at once the intrinsic nature of the Divine favour, and the spirit in which it is received and acted upon by sincere Christians.

CHAP. VII.

Saint Paul's prudence in his conduct towards the Jews.

The judgment of Saint Paul is remarkably manifest in the juxta-position of things. In opening his Epistle to his converts at Rome, among whom were many Jews for whose benefit he wrote, he paints the moral character of the Pagan capital in the darkest colours. The fidelity of his gloomy picture is corroborated by an almost contemporary historian,* who, though a Pagan and a countryman, paints it in still blacker shades, and without the decorum observed by Saint Paul.

The representation here made of Roman vice, would be, in itself sufficiently pleasing to the Jews; and it would be more so, when we observe, what is most worthy of observation, the nature of the charges brought against the Romans. As if the wisdom of God had been desirous of vindicating itself by the lips of Paul in the eyes of his own countrymen the Jews, the vices charged upon the Romans are exactly those which stand in opposition to the spirit of some one injunction of the Decalogue. Now, though the heathen writers were unacquainted with this code, yet the spontaneous breach of its statutes proved most clearly these statutes to have been suggested by the most correct foreknowledge of the evil propensities of our common nature. The universal violation of the law, even by those who knew it not, manifested the omniscience of the Lawgiver.

And, let it be further remarked in this connection, that no exceptions could be taken against the justice of God, for animadverting on the breach of a law, which was not known: inasmuch as, so faithful was the law of Mount Sinai to the law of conscience, the revealed to the natural code of morals, that the Romans in offending one had offended both; in breaking unwittingly the Decalogue, they had knowingly rebelled against the law of conscience; they had sinned against the light of nature; they had stifled the suggestions of their better judgment; they had consciously abused natural mercies; they had confounded the distinctions of good and evil, of which they were not insensible. 'Their conscience bore them witness' that they violated many obvious duties, so that even these were without excuse.'

The unconverted Jews would, doubtless, then feel no small pleasure in contemplating this hideous portrait of human crimes as without excuse, and would naturally be tempted, with their usual self-complacency, to turn it to their own advantage, and boastfully to thank God that they were not like other men, or even like these Romans.

To check this unbecoming exultation, the apostle, with admirable dexterity, in the very next chapter † begins to pull down their high conceits. He presents them with a frightful picture of themselves, drawn from the life, and aggravated by a display of that superior light and knowledge which rendered their immoralities far more inexcusable. To the catalogue of the vices which he had reprehended in the others, he adds that of self-sufficiency, arrogance, and harsh judgment, which formed so distinguished a feature in the Pharisaic character. Paul in this point shows the equity of

* Suetonius. † Romans, ch. ii

distributive justice. The Jews had sinned, not only against the laws they knew, but the law they venerated.—They rested in the law, not with gratitude for the distinction, but with security in the privilege; and they were ruined, he suggests, by a vain confidence in those external advantages which would have been their glory, had not privilege been converted into a substitute for piety. What apology should he now offer for the sins of the chosen nation, the peculiar people, the possessors and the boasters of the law, distinguished, not only by having received, but by being the hereditary, exclusive proprietors of the Divine Oracles? Thus, while he convicts his own nation, he gives an awful lesson to posterity of the vanity of forms and profession, that it is not possessing nor dispersing the Bible that will carry men to heaven, but only as they individually believe its doctrines, submit to its authority, and conform to its precepts. The apostle reminds them, that it is not the knowledge of God's will, which they possessed; nor the approbation of 'things that are excellent,' which they manifested; nor their confident ambition of teaching others; nor their skill to guide the blind; nor the form of knowledge; nor the letter of the law, which could avail without personal holiness.

After this severe reproof, for doing themselves the wrong things they censured, and for not doing the right things they taught, he suddenly turns upon them with a rapid succession of interrogatories respecting their own practice; personally applying each distinct subject of their instruction of others to each distinct failure of their own in those very points of conduct which they insisted on; proving upon them, that through this glaring inconsistency, 'the name of God was blasphemed among unbelievers.'

Thus he demonstrates that the Jew and Gentile stand on the same level with regard to their definitive sentence, each being to be judged according to their respective law. Nay, the conscientious Pagan will find more favour than the immoral Jew. Profession will not justify, but aggravate offence. Men, indeed, may see our exactness in forms and observances, and will justly commend what is in itself commendable; but as they cannot discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, they may admire as piety what is at worst hypocrisy, and at best but form. Whilst of the sincere Jew he declares, as we may also of the sincere Christian, he is a Jew who *is one inwardly, not in the letter, but in the heart and the spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

By the august simplicity and incontrovertible reasoning of this Epistle to Rome, and by that supernatural power which accompanied it, he brought down the arrogance of human ability from its loftiest heights, subdued the pride of philosophy in its strong holds, and superseded the theology, without aiming at the splendour, of the most amiable and eloquent of all the Romans in his admired work on the 'Nature of the gods.' By one short address to that city, written in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, he 'destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Knowing that pride was the dominant disposition of his own countrymen, he loses no occasion of attacking this master sin, and frequently intimates how ill it became such an insignificant and perverse people to arrogate to themselves a superiority, for which though their advantages furnish them with means, their practice furnishes them with no shadow of pretence.

In speaking on this subject, Saint Paul used none of the cant, but displayed all the kindness of liberality. Speaking of the Jews, 'he bears them record that they had a zeal for God,' but instantly his veracity obliged him to qualify his candour, by lamenting that their zeal was not regulated by knowledge. Their perverseness rather increased his desire of serving them, than drove him into a hopeless indifference; their provocations grieved, but neither silenced nor exasperated him.

It was the high destiny of this distinguished apostle, that he was to be the honoured instrument of enlarging, to an indefinite extent, the hitherto contracted pale of Christianity. The law of Moses had been committed to one single people, and it was one of the conditions of that law, that they to whom it was given were interdicted from any free intercourse with the rest of the world. A larger heart and a higher mind than those of Paul could not have been found for the new and expanded service. Christianity, through him, opened wider her liberal arms, broke through the narrow barrier, and carried her unconditional offers of boundless emancipation to every captive of sin and ignorance throughout all the kingdoms of the world.

But though Paul's original destination was, that he should be the apostle of the Gentiles; though his labours were to be more especially consecrated to that innumerable mass to whom the narrow minded Jews grudged the very chance of access to heaven; yet where ever he came he showed this mark of regard, that he opened his first public instructions in the Jewish synagogue, referring the hearers in his discourses to their own prophets, as he did his Pagan auditors to their own authors.

It was necessary that the word of God should be first spoken to the Jews, they being the depositaries of the antecedent revelations made by the Almighty; which revelations being preparatory to the introduction of the Gospel, and abounding with prophetic intimations of the Messiah, if the Jews should accept the new revelation as the completion of the old, it would largely contribute to convince the heathen that Christianity was in truth a Divine institution.

The annals of the Jews, insulated as they had been as a people, had become, by Divine appointment, connected with the history of other nations. Their captivity had brought them into contact with Persia and Babylon. As they always continued a commercial people, they had, after their dispersion, by their extensive traffic, carried their religion with their commerce into various countries. Thus their proverbial love of gain had been over-ruled to a providential purpose, that of carrying the knowledge of the one true God among the Gentiles. This again, by that secret working of Infinite Wisdom, served as a prelude to the appearance

of Christianity in these countries, and would probably lessen their indisposition to receive it. By the same providential ordination of that Power who educes good from evil, the Emperor Claudius, in banishing the Christians from Rome, caused the faith to be more extensively spread by these exiles, who were dispersed through different countries:—and, to mention another instance, by the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, though the comfort of Christian society was mutually lost, yet their separation caused the Gospel to be preached at the same time in two places instead of one. But though the sins of the worst men, and the infirmities of the best, are made subservient to God's gracious purposes, they justify neither the resentment of the Saint, nor the crime of the Emperor.

Saint Paul, in directing his instructions, first to the Jewish sojourners in the heathen cities, bequeathed an important lesson to all reformers, —that the most extensive plans of doing good to strangers should be accompanied with the most unabated zeal at home; and that natural connexions have the prior, though not the exclusive claim to their services.

If in the first promulgation of the Gospel-message, the apostle showed a regard to the *rights* of the Jewish nation, in his subsequent conduct on every possible occasion, he consults even their *prejudices.* At all times he showed as much respect for their religion as was consistent with that which he now professed; always studiously endeavouring to obviate objection, and to cut off every plausible ground of complaint. Thus, in treating with deference the Jewish laws and usages, though virtually abrogated, he loudly instructs us that temperance is not to be swallowed up by zeal; that it may be prudent for a time, to let some inferior errors alone, yet not without intimation or implication that they *are* errors; that premature attacks upon the lesser may obstruct the removal of the greater. And in other cases we may learn, that though extirpation may be indispensably necessary, yet it may, under certain circumstances, be better effected by the gradual process of successive strokes, than by laying at the first blow the axe to the root.

A lesson of discreet kindness may also be learnt from the same example in the domestic walks of life. If pious young persons do not patiently bear with any averseness in a parent or a friend from that serious spirit which they themselves have been happily brought to entertain; moroseness and ill-humoured opposition will not only increase the distaste, instead of recommending a religion, of which their own *temper affords so unamiable* and so unfair a specimen.

It was the same discretion which led Paul at one time to confer on Timothy* the initiatory rite of the Jewish church, because his mother was of Jewish extraction; and at another, induced him to forbid Titus undergoing the same ceremony, because his origin was Pagan.† The one was allowed, to avoid doing violence to Jewish prejudices; the other prohibited, lest the Gentile convert should be taught to place his dependance on any thing but the Saviour. He inflexibly resisted granting this introductory rite to Pagan converts. Though this union of candour with firmness is a very exemplary part of his character, it has not escaped the charge of inconsistency. But he thought it was acting in a more Christian spirit, to continue, in different instances, his conformity to ancient usages than by a violent opposition to mere forms to irritate persons, some of whom conscientiously persevered in them.

Perhaps no quality has been more fatal to the interests of Christianity than prejudice. It is the moral cataract of the human mind. In vain the meridian sun of Truth darts his full beams The mental eye is impervious to the strongest ray. When religion is to be assailed, prejudice knows how to blend antipathies. It leagued those mutual enemies Herod and Pontius Pilate in one common cause. It led the Jews to prefer the robber to the Saviour. Though they abhorred the Roman yoke, yet rather than Jesus shall escape, 'they will have no king but Cæsar.' At Jerusalem it had united the bigot Pharisee and the infidel Sadducee against Paul, till his declaration that he was of the former class, by exciting a party-spirit, suspended, but did not extinguish their fury. At Athens it combined, in one joint opposition, two sects, the most discordant in sentiment and practice. When truth was to be attacked, the rigid Stoic could unite with the voluptuous Epicurean.

Prejudice had not only blinded the understanding of the Jews, so as to prevent their receiving the truth, but led them to violate it, by asserting a glaring falsehood. When our Lord told them that 'if they would know the truth, the truth would make them free'—as they had no idea of spiritual freedom, so of civil liberty they had nothing to boast. But, exasperated at any offer of deliverance, because it implied subjugation, they indignantly replied, 'we were never in bondage to any man,' though it was notorious that they had been bond-slaves in Egypt, captives in Babylon, and were, at the very moment of this proud boast, tributary to the Romans.

Ignorance and prejudice respecting religion can never be fairly pleaded in excuse by minds cultivated by diligent inquiry on other subjects. Paul, indeed, says, that, though a persecutor, he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly. The apology from him is valid, for he does not offer the plea for ignorance and prejudice, till he was cured of both. His sincerity appears in his abandoning his error, his humility in confessing it. Our spiritual strength is increased by the retrospection of our former faults. This remembrance left a compassionate feeling for the errors of others on the impressible heart of Saint Paul. Perhaps in his early mad career against the Church of Christ, he might be permitted to carry it to such lengths, to afford a proof that Omnipotence can subdue even prejudice!

It is a melancholy feature in the character of the human mind, that Saint Paul met with less mercy from his brethren, among whom he had been bred, and whose religion approached so much nearer to that which he had adopted, than

* Acts, xvi. 3. † Gal. ii.

from the higher class of the Pagans, who stood at the farthest possible distance from it. Caiaphas, Ananias, Tertullus, and the whole Sanhedrim, were far more violent than Lysias, Felix, Festus, Gallio, the town-clerk of Ephesus, or the rulers of Thessalonica.

Even on that awful occasion, when prejudice did its worst, the Roman judge who condemned the Saviour of the world, was more candid than the High Priest, who delivered him up. While the Jews cried, Crucify! the Governor declared 'he found no fault in him:' and, but for the suppleness and venality of his character, would have protected the life which he sacrificed to Jewish bigotry. While Pilate deliberated, Caiaphas cut the matter short on the plea of *expediency**—'it is expedient that one man should die for the people.' In this High Priest the doctrine found a patron worthy of itself.

There was in the Divine Sufferer a veiled majesty; there was a mysterious grandeur thrown round his character; there were glimpses of glory breaking through the obscurity in which he was shrouded, which excited a curiosity not unmingled with fear in the great ones of the earth. It was a grand illustration of that solemn indistinctness which is said to be one cause of the sublime. Both Herod and Pilate were surprised into something like an involuntary respect, mixed with a vague apprehension of they knew not what.

But to return from this too long digression, for which the only apology that can be offered, is, that the uniform temper and conduct of Saint Paul with the Jews was eminently calculated to parry every objection that had any show of reason, and to remove every prejudice which was not invincible.

In the case of Paul, Agrippa appears to have been the only Jew in authority who ever manifested any show of candour towards him. Even the offended Athenians were so far affected with his discourse, as to betray their emotion by saying, 'We will hear thee again on this matter;' thus civilly softening rejection into procrastination;—while there is scarcely an instance of any Jewish people, as a body, fairly inquiring into the truth of the Christian doctrine with a real desire of information.

The Bereans, indeed, offer an honourable exception, and are accordingly distinguished by one, who rarely employs epithets, the biographer of Saint Paul, with the appellation of 'noble.' This thinking people did not lightly embrace the new religion without inquiry, but received it upon rational examination, daily searching the Scriptures; thus presenting us with an example of that union of faith and reason which constitutes the character of a sound Christian.

Though the Gentiles were ready to oppose Saint Paul wherever he came, we do not find that they pursued him with hostility from one city to another, as the Jews of Thessalonica did, in following him to Berea, to excite a persecution against him.

The temper to which allusion has been made, is not, it is to be feared, quite extinct. Are there not, at this favoured period of light and knowledge, some Christians by profession, who manifest more hostility towards those who are labouring to procure instruction for the Hindoos, than towards Hindooism itself? Are not shades of our own colour looked at with a more jealous eye, than a colour of the most opposite character? and is not the remark too nearly founded in experience; that approximation rather inflames than cools; that nearness aggravates because it is not identity? If, like the apostle, a man is impelled by his conscience to act against the opinion of those with whom he desires to live well; to obey the impulse, as it is a severe trial of his feelings, so it is a surer test of his integrity, than to expose himself to the censure of his enemies; of *their* hostility he was assured before; he is, in the other case, risking the loss of his friends.

Saint Paul's prudence, under the Divine direction, led him to adopt very different measures in his intercourse with the Jews and with the Gentiles; measures suggested by the different condition of the two classes, both in their civil and religious circumstances. To the one, the very name of Messiah was unknown; of the other, he was both the glory and the shame. To the one true God in whom they fully believed, they were to add the reception of Jesus Christ. 'He came to his own,' but his own, so far from receiving, crucified him. Subsequently to this event, Paul laboured to convince them, that this was the Saviour promised, first by God himself, then by a long and unbroken succession of the very prophets whom they professed to venerate. With these adversaries, therefore, he had substantial grounds on which to expostulate; analogies, from which to argue; promises, which they believed; predictions, of which they had expected the accomplishment; and, to leave them without the shadow of excuse, he had to plead the actual recent fulfilment of these predictions.

But with the Gentiles he had no common ground on which to stand, no references to which to send them, no analogies from which to reason, except indeed the visible works of creation and providence. He did what a profound thinker of our own country has since done more in detail; he showed them *the analogy of revealed religion with the constitution and course of nature.** In this he had, as it were, to address their senses rather than their intellect or their knowledge, great as were both,—for their wisdom had served only to lead them wider from the mark.

As they were little acquainted with first principles, he had with them no middle way to take. He could not improve upon polytheism; there was no such thing as mending idolatry; it was not a building to be repaired; it must be demolished; no materials were to be picked out from its ruins towards the construction of the everlasting edifice; the rubbish must be rolled away. A clear stage must be left for the new order of things; with this order it had no compatabilities, old things were past away, all things must be come new.

* John xviii. 14.

* Bishop Butler.

The Sun of Righteousness which was to absorb the faint, but not false, lights of Judaism, was utterly to dispel the darkness of Paganism. One of the Roman emperors (most of whom thought that they could not have too many gods, nor too little religion) would have added Jesus to the number of their deities. Paul abhorred any such compromise. 'We know,' says he, 'an idol is nothing in the world.' Such an association, therefore, would not be of good and bad, but of every thing with nothing. Christianity would not accept of any thing short of the annihilation of the whole mythologic rabble.

The new economy was now to take place. The fundamental doctrine of One God over all blessed for ever, which had been long familiar to the Jew, was at length to be made known to the heathen, with the participation in common with the Jew, of salvation by his Son. The partition wall was taken down for ever.

Paul however retained, to the end of his ministry, a cordial kindness for 'his brethren after the flesh.' His heart's desire and prayer for Israel was, that they might be saved,—for the Rose of Sharon was grafted on the Stem of David. Not only the same God was to be worshipped by both, but 'Jesus whom he had sent;' while Paganism lay prostrate, never more to rise from its ruins. It is a remarkable circumstance, that while to this day surviving Israel remains without a temple, the surviving Pantheon remains without a worshipper.

CHAP. VIII.

Saint Paul's Judgment in his intercourse with the Pagans.

It is among the mysteries of Christianity, that the preaching of Jesus made so few converts, and his death so many. The more affecting were his discourses, the stronger was the indignation they excited; the deeper was the anxiety which he expressed for the salvation of men, so much the more vehemently were they exasperated against him; the more merciful were his miracles, so much the faster did they accelerate his ignominious catastrophe. 'Did not this prove,' says the eloquent Bossuet, 'that not his words, but his Cross was to bring all men to Him? Does it not prove that the power of his persuasion consisted in the shedding of his blood?' This he himself predicted—'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men into me.' Were it not for this reason, it would be astonishing to our shallow wisdom, that the Author of Christianity made so few proselytes to his own faith, and his apostles so many. That the disciple who denied him should, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, awaken, by a single sermon, the consciences of three thousand auditors; and that the persecutor, who reviled Him, should become under the influence of the same Divine Spirit, the mighty instrument of the conversion of the Pagan world.

If Saint Paul had declined visiting the learned and polished regions of Greece, it might have been produced against him, that he carefully avoided those cultivated cities where men were best able to judge of the consistency of the Gospel doctrines with its precepts, and of the truth of those miracles by which its Divinity was confirmed. The Greeks might have urged it as an argument against Paul's integrity, that he confined his preaching to the countries which they called barbarous, knowing they would be less acute in discovering inconsistencies, and more easily imposed upon by impostures which men of liberal education would have immediately detected. His visiting every city famous for literature, science, and philosophy, would also be a complete refutation of any such charge in after ages. 'Because,' says a judicious commentator, 'if upon an accurate examination, great numbers of men embraced the Gospel, who were best qualified to judge of its nature and evidences, their conversion would render it indubitable in after times, that the Gospel was supported by those great and undeniable miracles which were performed in every country by the preachers of Christianity; so that no person might hereafter suspect that idolatry was destroyed and Christianity established merely through the simplicity and ignorance of the people among whom it was first preached.'*

Saint Paul was with more propriety selected to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, than if he had been of Gentile extraction; none but a teacher, educated as he had been, under an eminent Jewish doctor, would have been so competent to produce, before both Jews and Gentiles, proofs that the miracles, sufferings, and death of Jesus happened in exact conformity to the predictions of those prophets of whom the Jews had perfect knowledge, and to whom, though the Gentiles previously knew them not, yet it is probable that he afterwards for their fuller confirmation would refer them.

There appears to have been a considerable difference between Saint Paul's reception among the Jewish and Gentile populace. Among the former, the 'common people, who had heard Jesus gladly,' must have had their prejudices softened, and in many instances removed; even those, probably, who were not converted, had seen and heard of his miracles with astonishment. They were also witnesses of the wonderful effects produced by Saint Peter's sermon. Their minds were become so favourably disposed, that after the miracle wrought by Peter and John,† the enraged council did not venture to punish them, 'because of the people, for all men glorified God for that which was done.'

While the Heathen governors seem, in their transactions with Saint Paul, less intolerant than the Jewish Sanhedrim, the Heathen multitude appear to have been more furious than the Jewish. The Jewish leaders had a personal hatred to Christ; the Gentile community had a national hatred to the Jews. If a party among the Jews detested the Christians, the Pagans as a body despised the Jews, whilst they would consider Christianity but as a new modification of an antiquated and degrading superstition, made worse by the offensive addition of certain tenets, still more unphilosophical and incredible.

* Macknight on the Life of Saint Paul
† Acts, ch. iv

than were taught under the old dispensation. The contempt of the Gentiles was founded on their ignorance of the true religion of Judaism, and that again had prevented any inquiry into their opinions. From the prejudiced pen of Tacitus, and the sarcastic muse of Juvenal, we see the disdain in which they were held. The great writers, only less culpable than modern infidels, like them collected a string of misrepresentations, and then turned into ridicule the system of their own invention.

The philosophers, who disagree each with the other, all join in the contemning more especially one doctrine of Christianity, which every sect alike conceived to be the most inconsistent with their own tenets, and the most contradictory to general philosophical principles,—the resurrection of the body, which they contemptuously called the *hope of worms*.

The Pagan magistrates looked with a jealous eye upon all innovators; not indeed so much from an aversion to any novelty of religious opinion, (for to this they were so indifferent as to make little objection to any mode of worship which did not seek to subvert their own;) but, through the machinations of the mercenary priests, who fearful of any invasion of their corrupt establishment, any detection of their frauds, any disclosure of their mysteries, any danger of their altars, their auguries, their profitable oracles, and above all, any abridgment of their political influence; excited the civil governors against Paul by the stale artifice of insinuating that his designs were hostile to the state.

The artisans who enriched themselves by the occupation of making the symbols of idolatry, found that, by the contempt into which their deities were likely to be brought, their craft would not only be endangered, but destroyed. This conviction, more perhaps than any zeal for their own religion, served to influence them also against that of Saint Paul. And finally the populace, who liked the easy and pleasant way of appeasing their divinities by shows and pageants, and ceremonies, and lustral days, were unwilling to lose their holidays, and all the decorations and pleasures which distinguished them, and did not care to exchange this gay and amusing religion for the spiritual, sober, and unostentatious worship of the Christians.

There was therefore no disposition in any class of society to receive the doctrines of the Gospel, or to forgive the intrusion of its teachers. Paul, unsupported, unfriended, had to open his own commission to audiences backed by multitudes, protected by power, patronized by learning, countenanced by the national priesthood. It was a far more unequal contest than that of David and Goliath; for, besides the people, he had to combat with the giants of Arcopagus. But greater was He that was for him, than they who were against him.

Had he not been an adept in the knowledge of human nature, how could there have been, in his diversified discourses, such an adaptation to the moral wants of men? His superiority in this respect appears not only in his general knowledge of man in the abstract, but in his acquaintance with life and manners, in what we call knowledge of the world; in his scrupulous observance of time and place, in his admirable judgment in so skilfully accommodating his discourses to the condition, character, and circumstances of the persons whom he addressed. To some he applied as to decided enemies to Christianity; to others as utterly unacquainted with its nature, and ignorant of its design, but not averse from inquiring into its truth. He always carefully distinguished between the errors of the followers of religion and the sins of her adversaries. To some he addressed himself as awakened, to others, as enlightened, to many as sincere, but to none as perfect.

The various powers of his opulent mind he exercised with a wise appropriation to the genius of those whom he addressed. With the Jews 'he reasoned;' with the Athenian controvertists 'he disputed;' at Ephesus 'he boldly disputed and persuaded.'

The apostle's zeal was never cooled by the improbability of success. He knew that what seemed hopeless to men was not impossible to God. Even at Paphos, where the most impure worship was offered to the most impure deity, he made a most important convert in the Proconsul himself.* This wise governor holds out an example to men in high public stations; he suffered not himself to be influenced by report, or duped by misrepresentation; he would hear with his own ears 'the word of God' which Paul preached, and see with his own eyes the miracle which confirmed it.

In his preaching at Antioch,† he introduces his great commission to the Gentiles in the most dignified and masterly manner, referring the Jewish auditors to the striking passages of their national history; to the prophecies and their fulfilment: to the attestation of the Baptist; to Christ's death and resurrection. He ends with a most awful peroration; 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish;' and then, with a measured sternness which nothing could shake, he makes the disclosure of that grand scheme, of Almighty goodness, the scheme of proclaiming to the Gentiles that Gospel which the chosen people to whom it had been offered, so contumeliously rejected. How striking the contrast of manner in which these words of the apostle were received by the two classes of hearers!—the envy and malignity, 'the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews;' the joyful gratitude with which the heathen 'glorified the word of the Lord,' at the annunciation of a blessing so vast and so unexpected!

To the people of Lystra his address is short, plain, and simple, yet passionate and energetic: so plain, as to be not only understood, but felt by the meanest auditor; yet so powerful, that when aided by a miracle of mercy, which he wrought before them, he scarcely restrained them from offering him divine honours. His appearance before Felix having been more largely detailed by the sacred historian, we may well be allowed a more particular consideration of it. Heathen historians represent Felix as having, by every kind of misconduct, excited disturbances in Judea, and by exactions and oppressions obtained the contempt of his subjects, to whom he

* Sergius Paulus. † Acts, ch. 13

had occasioned great calamities; his mal-administration, but for the intervention of the governor of Syria, would have kindled a war; and an instance of it indeed occurs on the very occasion of which we are about to speak, in Paul's long detention in confinement. It is recorded in the Acts, that he hoped the apostle would have bribed him with money, in order to procure his escape.*

Let us now contrast the different conduct of the popular advocate retained by the Jews against Paul, with that of Paul himself, towards this corrupt governor. Tertullus, a florid speaker, is not ashamed, in the true spirit of party oratory, to offer the grossest adulation to this wicked judge; not only extolling what he knew to be false,—the tranquillity produced by his administration, and 'the worthy deeds' done by him,—but even exalting him into a sort of deity, by whose *providence* their prosperity was procured. Then, in the usual strain of artful and disingenuous adulation, having already exceeded all bounds of decency, he finishes his harangue by hypocritically expressing his fears that praise 'might be tedious to him.'

After the affected declamation of this rhetorical parasite, how are we refreshed with the wise, temperate, and simple defence of the apostle! Instead of loading Tertullus with reproaches for the infamous charges of heresy and sedition brought against himself, he maintains a dignified silence till the governor 'beckoned to him to speak.' He then enters upon his vindication without a single invective against his accusers, and what is still more honourable to his own character, without a single compliment to his judge, though well aware that his liberty, and even his life, were in his hands. Unjust as Felix was, the charges against Paul were too flagrantly false to mislead him, and the noble simplicity of the prisoner's defence carried in it something so convincing to the understanding of the judge, that he durst not act upon the allegations of the accuser, nor condemn the innocent.

At a subsequent meeting, Paul seemed more intent to alarm the conscience of the governor, than he had previously been to assert his own integrity. Felix, ever presenting us with the idea of a bad mind, ill at ease with itself, sends for Paul, and desires to 'hear' him concerning the faith of Christ.' Charmed, no doubt, with the occasion given him, Paul uses it widely. He does not embark on topics irrelevant to the immediate case of his auditors, nor by personal reproof does he expose himself to the charge of contumacy. He never loses sight of the respect due to the judge's office, but still, as he knew the venality and profligacy with which he administered that office, together with the licentious character of his wife, who was present, he reasoned, not declaimed; he '*reasoned*' on the virtues in which he knew they were so shamefully deficient—*righteousness and temperance;* and then, doubtless with the dignity of one who was himself to 'judge angels,' closed his discourse with referring these notorious violators of *both* duties to the judgment to *come*.

The result of this discourse is the best evidence of the power of his reasonings.—Conscience struck, *Felix trembled.* The judge dissolved the court, dismissed the prisoner, withheld the sentence, deferred the further trial to an indefinite time,—which time he contrived should never arrive,—till both were cited to appear together before the mighty Judge of quick and dead. Paul throughout maintains his character, and Felix adds one to the numberless instances in which strong convictions not being followed up, only serve to enhance guilt and aggravate condemnation.

To the inhabitants of Ephesus, his reasoning and his persuasive powers are alternately exercised. In his conduct in this place we incidentally discover a singular instance of his discretion in avoiding to excite unnecessary irritation. He found in the Ephesians a strong devotion to one particular idol; yet it is intimated, in a candid speech of their chief magistrate, that he had neither reviled their great goddess, Diana, nor profaned their temples. We may, therefore, fairly presume that he contented himself with preaching against idolatry in general, instead of endeavouring to excite the popular indignation by inveighing against the local idol. *

It is not the meanest of the triumphs of incipient Christianity, that at this place the professors of forbidden arts brought out their costly professional books, the registers of their unlawful mysteries, and burnt them, giving a striking proof of the sincerity of their conversion, by thus putting it out of their power to repeat their impious incantations; their destroying them in the presence of the people, was a triple sacrifice of their prejudices, their credit, and their profit. What an example have they left to those who, though professing Christianity, give birth, or afford encouragement, to profane or profligate books, which, though of a different character from those of the Ephesian sorcerers, possess a *magic* power over the mind of the reader, not less pernicious in itself, and far more extensive in its influence. †

Saint Paul's good sense, and may we be permitted to say, his good taste—qualities we could rather wish than expect to see *always* brought to the service of religion,—were eminently displayed in his examination at Cesarea. While his pleading before the royal audience, and other persons of dignity and station, exhibits a fine specimen of wisdom and good breeding, it exhibits it without the smallest sacrifice of principle, or the least abatement of truth. At once, his doctrines are scriptural, and his language is classical. On this occasion, as upon all others, conscious dignity is mingled with politeness, an air, carrying with it the authority of truth, with the gentleness of Christianity, pervades all he says and does.

This admirable conduct has extorted, even from that eloquent rhapsodist, the sceptical au-

* Acts, ch. 24.

* Acts, 19.

† When the French revolution had brought to light the fatal consequences of some of Voltaire's writings, some half-scrupulous persons, no longer willing to afford his fourscore volumes a place in their library, sold them at a low price. This measure, though it 'stayed the plague' in their own houses, caused the infection to spread wider. The Ephesian magicians made no such compromise; they burnt theirs

thor* of 'the Characteristics,' a confession, 'how handsomely Paul accommodates himself to the apprehension and temper of those polite people, the witty Athenians, and the Roman court of judicature, in the presence of their great men and ladies.' At this last-named memorable audience, with what admirable temper does he preserve his reverence for constituted authorities, while he boldly recapitulates those passages in his former life which were naturally calculated to give offence.—His preliminary compliment to Agrippa was judiciously conceived in a manner to procure attention to his projected defence, without in any sense deserving the name of flattery, or in any degree compromising the truth he meant to deliver. While it answered its proper end, it served as an attestation of his own veracity and of the truth of Christianity; for in complimenting the king on the knowledge of the facts to which he referred him, he laid himself open to immediate detection if the circumstances had not been strictly correct, affording, 'a remarkable proof,' says Lord Lyttelton, 'both of the notoriety of the fact and the integrity of the man, who, with so fearless a confidence, could call upon a king to give testimony for him, while he was sitting in judgment upon him.'

The whole defence is as rational as it is elegant. The self-possession, the modest intrepidity, and the pertinent choice of matter; furnish a model for innocent sufferers under similar circumstances.

As on the one hand it is a great hardship for an accused person to have to plead before ignorance and prejudice, so on the other it was not more just than polite and prudent, for Paul to begin by expressing his satisfaction that he should at least be tried by a judge, who, from his knowledge, his education, and his habits, was competent to determine on the cause. While he scruples not to declare the invcterate prejudices, the blindness, and persecuting spirit of his former life, he does ample justice to his own character as a scholar and a moralist. Well as he knew that his piety would not clear him at the tribunal before which he stood, yet the fair justification of himself from the crimes laid to his charge, was due, not only to his own character, but to the religion which he professed.

Having been himself brought to embrace Christianity by no powers of reasoning, by no trains of argument, he allowed himself either to employ or neglect them at discretion in addressing these assemblies. On the present occasion he limits himself to matter of fact, and seems to think a statement of his own conversion would be more likely to impress a judge 'expert in all customs and questions which were among the Jews.' He insisted dogmatically but on one point, the great doctrine of the Resurrection, for asserting which he had been so often assailed; and he asks, why should it be thought a thing incredible? This, however, he does not *argue;* perhaps conscious of having so amply stated, and so argumentatively defended it in his epistolary writings, now sufficiently known.

* Lord Shaftsbury.

Festus, with that scorn which any allusion to his tenet never failed to excite, impatiently interrupted him, but with a reproof which had more of irony than anger, as if he thought his credulity rather the effect of insanity than of wickedness, the object of ridicule rather than of censure. This irritating charge, however, did not make Paul forget the respect due to the place which Festus filled; and while he vindicated the soundness of his own intellect and the sobriety of his doctrine, he did not fail to address the governor by the honourable appellation of 'most noble,' to which his dignity entitled him. His example in this respect, as in all other particulars, was of an instructive nature; teaching us to separate the civility of speech due to office from the respect due only to personal character, and justify the modern titles and epithets of reverence which have occasioned so much discussion in many of our public forms.

The apostle's speech had produced a considerable emotion in the king, who, however, was determined to act rather upon his convenience than his convictions. The apostle concludes as he had begun, by seizing on the part of Agrippa's character which he could most conscientiously commend, his perfect knowledge of the subject before the court. In his solemn interrogation at the close, 'King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets?' more is meant than meets the ear; for, if he really believed the prophets, could he refuse to believe the accomplishment of their predictions? His emphatical answer to his own question, 'I know that thou believest,' drew from the startled monarch a free avowal of his partial convictions. The brief but affecting prayer with which the trial closes, is as elegantly turned as if the Apostle had been the courtier.

Agrippa appears, in this instance, in a light so much more advantageous than any of the other judges before whom either Paul or his Lord were cited, that we cannot but regret that he let slip an occasion so providentially put in his way. This illustrious person affords another awful proof of the danger of stifling convictions, postponing inquiries, and neglecting opportunities.

Though the political and military splendour of Athens had declined, and the seat of government, after the conquest of Greece by the Romans, was transferred to Corinth, yet her sun of glory was not set. Philosophy and the liberal arts were still carefully cultivated; students in every department, and from every quarter, resorted thither for improvement, and her streets were crowded by senators and rhetoricians, philosophers and statesmen.

As Paul visited Athens with views which had instigated no preceding, and would probably be entertained by no subsequent traveller, so his attention in that most interesting city was attracted by objects far different from theirs. He was in all probability qualified to range, with a learned eye, over the exquisite pieces of art, and to consult and enjoy the curious remains of literature,—theatres, and temples, and schools of philosophy, sepulchres, and cenotaphs, statues of patriots, and portraits of heroes;—monuments by which the artist had insured to himself the immortality he was conferring. Yet one edifice

alone arrested the apostle's notice.—the altar of the idolatrous worshippers. One record of antiquity alone invited his critical acumen,—THE INSCRIPTION TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

The disposition of this people, their passion for disputation, their characteristic and proverbial love of novelty, had drawn together a vast assembly. Many of the philosophical sects eagerly joined the audience. Curiosity is called by an ancient writer, the wantonness of knowledge. These critics came, it is likely, not as inquirers, but as spies.—The grave stoics probably expected to hear some new unbroached doctrines which they might overthrow by argument; the lively Epicureans some fresh absurdity in religion, which would afford a new field for diversion; the citizens, perhaps, crowding and listening from the mere motive that they might afterwards have to tell the *new thing* they should hear. Paul took advantage of their curiosity. As he habitually opened his discourses with great moderation, we are the less surprised at the measured censure, or rather the implied civility of his introduction. The ambiguous term 'superstitious' which he employed, might be either construed into respect for their spirit of religious inquiry, or into disapprobation of its unreasonable excess; at least he intimated that they were so far from not reverencing the acknowedged god, that they worshipped one which was 'unknown.'

With his usual discriminating mind, he did not 'reason' with these elegant and learned Polytheists 'out of the Scriptures,' of which they were totally ignorant, as he had done at Antioch and Cesarea, before judges who were trained in the knowledge of them: he addressed his present auditors with an eloquent exposition of natural religion, and of the providential government of God, politely illustrating his observations by citing passages from one of their own authors. Even by this quotation, without having recourse to Scripture, he was able to controvert the Epicurean doctrine, that the Deity had no interference with human concerns; showing them on their own principles, that 'we are the offspring of God;' that 'in Him we live and move, and have our being;' and it is worth observing, that he could select from a poet, sentiments which should come nearer to the truth than from a philosopher.

The orator, rising with his subject, after briefly touching on the long suffering of God, awfully announced that ignorance would be no longer any plea for idolatry; that if the Divine forbearance had permitted it so long, it was in order to make the wisest not only see, but feel the insufficiency of their own wisdom in what related to the great concerns of religion; but he now *commanded all men every where to repent.*—He concludes by announcing the solemnities of Christ's future judgment, and the resurrection from the dead.

In considering Saint Paul's manner of unfolding to these wits and sages the power and goodness of that Supreme Intelligence who was the object of their 'ignorant worship,' we are at once astonished at his intrepidity and his management; intrepidity, in prefering this bold charge against an audience of the most accomplished scholars in the world,—in charging ignorance upon Athens! blindness of 'the eye of Greece!'—and management in so judiciously conducting his oration that the audience expressed neither impatience nor displeasure, till he began to unfold the most obnoxious and unpopular of all doctrines,—Jesus raised from the dead.

It is recorded by Saint Luke of this polished and highly intellectual city, that it was *wholly given up to idolatry;* a confirmation of the remark of Pausanias, that there were more image-worshippers in Athens than in all Greece besides.

We have here a clear proof that the reasonableness of Christianity was no recommendation to its adoption by those people who, of all others, were acknowledged to have cultivated reason the most highly.—What a melancholy and heart-humbling conviction, that wit and learning, in their loftiest elevation, open no natural avenue to religion in the heart of man; that the grossest ignorance leaves it not more inaccessible to Divine truth. Paul never appears to have made so few proselytes in any place as at Athens; and it is so far from being true, as its disciples assert, that philosophy is never intolerant, that the most bitter persecution ever inflicted on the Christians was under the most philosophical of all the Roman Emperors. *

In this celebrated city, in which Plato, near five hundred years before, discoursed so eloquently only the immortality of the soul, Paul first preached the resurrection of the soul, Paul first preached the resurrection of the body. Horace Speaks of *searching* for truth in the groves of Academus. But Saint Paul was the first who ever *taught* it there.

CHAP. IX.

On the general principles of Saint Paul's writings.

ONE of the most distinguished writers of antiquity, says, that 'one man may believe himself to be as certain of his error as another of his truth.' How many illustrious ancients, under the influence of this conceit, may either, have carried truth out of its proper sphere, or brought on some error to fill the place where the truth, so transferred, had left vacant. The Pagan philosophers held so great a variety of opinions of the supreme good of the nature of man, that one of their most learned writers is said to have reckoned the number to amount to no less than two hundred and eighty-eight. †

Christianity ought to be accounted a singular blessing, were it only that he has simplified this conjectural arithmetic, and reduced the hundreds to a unit. Saint Paul's brief, but comprehensive definition, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' forming one grand central point, in which, if all the vain aims and unsatisfied desires of the anxious

* Marcus Aurelius. † Varro.

philosophers do not meet, this succinct character of Christianity abundantly supplies what their aims and desires failed to accomplish; for 'they erred, not knowing the Scriptures: those Scriptures which proclaim the wants of man when they declare his depravity, and the power of God, in providing its only remedy.'

Saint Paul labours sedulously to convince his converts of the apostacy of the human race. He knew this to be the only method of rendering the Scriptures either useful or intelligible; no other book having explicitly proclaimed or circumstantially unfolded this prime truth. He furnishes his followers with this key, that they might both unlock the otherwise hidden treasures of the Bible, and open the secret recesses of their own hearts. He knew that, without this strict inquisition into what was passing within, without this experimental knowledge of their own lapsed state, the best books may be read with little profit, and even prayer be offered up with little effect.

He directs them to follow up this self-inspection, because without it they could not determine on the quality, even of their best actions. 'Examine yourselves; prove your own selves,' is his frequent exhortation. He knew, that if we did not impede the entrance of Divine light into our own hearts, it would show us many an unsuspected corruption; that it would not only disclose existing evils, but awaken the remembrance of former ones, of which perhaps the consequences still remain, though time and negligence have effaced the act itself from the memory. Whatever be the structure they intend to erect, the apostles always dig deep for a foundation before they begin to build. 'On Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' as on a broad basis, Saint Paul builds all doctrine and grounds all practice; and firm indeed, must that foundation be, which has to sustain such a weight. He points to him as the sole author of justifying faith. From this doctrine he derives all sanctity, all duty, and all consolation. After having proved it to be productive of that most solid of all supports, *peace of God;* this peace he promises, not only through the benignity of God, but through the grace of Christ, showing, by an induction of particulars, the process of this love of God in its moral effects,—how afflictions promote 'patience,' how patience fortifies the mind by 'experience,' and how experience generates 'hope;'—reverting always in the end to that point from which he sets out; to that love of God, which is kindled in the heart by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

He makes all true holiness to hinge on this fundamental doctrine of redemption by the Son of God, never separating his offices from his person, nor his example from his propitiation; never teaching that man's nature is to be reformed, without pointing out the instrument, and the manner by which the reformation is to be effected. For one great excellence of Saint Paul's writings consist, not only in his demonstrating to us the riches and the glories of Christ, but in showing how they may be conveyed to us: how we may become possessed of an interest, of a right in them.

Though there is no studied separations of the doctrinal from the practical parts of his Epistles they who would enter most deeply into a clear apprehension of the former, would best do it by a strict obedience to the precepts of the latter. He every where shows, that the way to receive the truth is to obey it; and the way to obey is to love it. Nothing so effectually bars up the heart and even the understanding, against the reception of truth, as the practice of sin. 'If any man will do his will,' says the Divine Teacher himself, 'he shall *know* of the doctrine.'*

It is in this practical application of Divine truth, that the supreme excellence of St. Paul's preaching consists. Whenever he has been largely expatiating on the glorious privileges of believers, he never omits to guard his doctrine from the use to which he probably foresaw loose professors might convert it, if delivered to the uninformed, stripped from the connection with its proper adjunct. †

Thus, his doctrines are never barely theoretical. He hedges them in, as we have elsewhere observed, with the whole circle of duties, or with such as more immediately grow out of his subject, whether they relate to God, to others, or ourselves. Though it would not be easy to produce, in his writings, a single doctrine which is not so protected, nevertheless, perhaps, there is scarcely one, in the adoption of which, bold intruders have not leaped over the fence he raised; or by their negligence laid it bare for the unhallowed entrance of others, converting his inclosure into a waste. If the duty of living righteously, soberly, and godly, was ever pre-eminently taught by any instructor, that instructor is Saint Paul; if ever the instructions of any teacher have been strained or perverted, they are his. But if he never presses any virtue, as independent of faith, which is too much the case with some, he never fails to press it as a consequence of faith, which is sometimes neglected by others. The one class preach faith as if it were an insulated doctrine; the other, virtue, as if it were a self-originating principle.

It is also worthy of observation, that in that complete code of Evangelical law, the twelfth chapter of the Romans, after unfolding with the most lucid clearness, the great truths of our religion, he carefully inculcates the *temper* it demands, before he proceeds to enforce the duties it imposes; that we must be 'holy' before we can be 'acceptable;' that we must be transformed in the renewing of our mind, is at once made a consequence of the grace of God, and a preliminary to our duties towards our fellow creatures. We must offer up '*ourselves* a living sacrifice to God,' before we are directed to act conscientiously to man. The other disposition, which he names as an indispensable prelude, is humility; for in the very opening of his subject, he prefaces it with an injunction, *not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.* To omit to cultivate the spirit in which doctrines are to be embraced, and the temper in which

* John vii. 17.

† We learn from St. Peter, that this perversion had begun even in his own time. Ebion and his followers afterwards pushed the charge against Paul as far as antinomianism. Nor has the spirit of the accusation on the one hand, nor the adulteration of the principle on the other, entirely ceased

duties are to be performed, is to mutilate Christianity, and to rob it of its appropriate character and its highest grace. After having shown the means for the acquisition of virtue, he teaches us diligently to solicit that divine aid, without which all means are ineffectual, and all virtues spurious.

In this invaluable summary, or rather this spirit of Christian laws, there is scarcely any class of persons, to which some appropriate exhortation is not directed. After particularly addressing those who fill different degrees of the ministerial office, he proceeds to the more general instructions in which all are equally interested. Here, again, he does not fail to introduce his documents with some powerful principle. Affection and sincerity are the inward feelings which must regulate action; 'let *love* be without *dissimulation*.'

The love he inculcates is of the most large and liberal kind; compassion to the indigent, tender sympathy with the feelings of others, whether of joy or sorrow, as their respective circumstances require; the duties of friendship and hospitality are not forgotten; condescension to inferiors; a disposition to be at peace with all men is enforced; from his deep knowledge of the human heart, implying, however, by a significant parenthesis—*if it be possible*—the difficulty, if not impossibility, which its corruptions would bring to the establishment of universal discord.

He applies himself to all the tender sensibilities of the heart, and concatenates the several fruits of charity so closely, from being aware how ready people are to deceive themselves on this article, and to make one branch of this comprehensive grace stand proxy for another: he knew that many are disposed to make almsgiving a ground for neglecting the less pleasant parts of charity; that some give, in order that they may rail, and think that while they open their purses, they need put no restraint on their tongues.

He closes his catalogue of duties with those which we owe to our enemies; and in a paradox peculiar to the genius of Christianity, shows that the revengeful are the conquered, and those who have the magnanimity to forgive, the conquerors. He exhorts to this new and heroic species of victory over evil, not merely by exhibiting patience under it, but by overcoming its assaults with good. Could this conquest over nature, which soars far above mere forgiveness, be obtained by any other power but the supernatural strength previously communicated?

Thus he every where demonstrates, that the maxims of the morality he inculcates, are derived from a full fountain, and fed by perennial supplies. When he speaks of human virtue, he never disconnects it from Divine influence. When he recommends the 'perfecting holiness,' it must be done 'in the fear of the Lord.' He shows that there is no other way of conquering the love of the world, the allurements of pleasure, and the predominance of selfishness, but by seeking a conformity to the image of God, as well as by aiming at obedience to his law.

That ignorance is the mother of devotion, has been the axiom of a superstitious church; nor is the votary of fanaticism less apt to despise knowledge than the slave of superstition.

The first thing that God formed in nature was light. This preliminary blessing disclosed the other beauties of his creation, which had else remained as unseen as if they had remained uncreated. By that analogy which runs through his works, his first operation on the heart is bestowing on it the light of his grace. Amidst the causes of the corruption, the darkness of ignorance is scarcely to be distinguished from that of sin.

Such indeed is the condition of man in his present state, that he ought to labour indefatigably under the Divine teaching, to recover some glimpses of that intellectual worth which he lost when he forfeited his spiritual excellence. Religious men should be diligent in obtaining knowledge, or they will not be able to resist gainsayers; they will swallow assertions for truths, and conclude every objection to be valid which they cannot refute. An unfurnished mind is liable to a state of continual indecision. Error will have the advantage in the combat, where the champion of truth enters the field without arms; for impiety still shows itself, as it did in the Garden of Eden, under the semblance of knowledge.

Saint Paul estimated just views and right notions of religion so highly, that he makes the improvement in knowledge in the Colossians, a matter not only of fervent desire, but of incessant prayer. He prays not only that they might be sincere, but intelligent Christians, 'filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;' but he does not forget to teach them that this knowledge must be made practical, *they must walk worthy of the Lord, they must be fruitful in every good work.* It is among the high ascriptions of glory to Christ, that in Him are hid all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge*. And this ascription is pressed upon *us* for the manifest purpose of impelling us to seek a due participation of them from Him.

Saint Paul was a strenuous opposer of religious ignorance. It is not too much to say, that he places Intelligence as the ground-work of Christianity. To know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, he considers as the first rudiments taught in the divine school. This knowledge can only be acquired by a cordial love, and indefatigable study of the volume of inspiration. All the conjectures of the brightest imagination, all the discoveries of the profoundest science, all the glorious objects of created beauty, all the attributes of angels, all the ideas of excellence we can conceive or combine, affords but faint shadows, inexpressive figures of the Divinity. The best lights we can throw upon his perfections are from his own Word, assisted by his own Spirit; the clearest sight we can obtain of them is from our faith in that word, and our only strength from our acquiescence in the offers of that Spirit.

And where shall we look in the whole sacred Record for a more consummate statement, at once of the proper objects of knowledge, and of the duties resulting from its acquisition, than in the writings of this Apostle? No one who has devoutly studied him, can shift off the neglect

of duty by the plea of ignorance. It would be vindicating one sin by committing another. He every where exhibits such luminous characters of God and Christ, such clear views of right and wrong, such living pictures of good and evil, such striking contrasts of human corruption and Christian purity, that he who would evade the condemnation which awaits the neglect, or the violation of duty, must produce some other apology than that he did not know it. What excuse will those modern sceptics offer for their traducement of writings, which they were too shrewd either to despise or neglect? Whatever is good in their systems, they derive from a Revelation which they affect to contemn. They are rich only from what they steal, not from that property which they may call their own. Reason, which could in no wise discover what Christianity has taught, is glad to adopt, while she disavows, what she could never have found out herself. She has, however, too little honesty, and too much pride, to acknowledge her obligation, to the source from which she draws. She mixes up what she best likes with her own materials, and defies the world, by separating them, to detect the cheat. Revelation, in truth, has improved reason, as well as perfected morals.

But if the human reasoner despises Christianity, some Christians are too much disposed to villify reason. This contempt they did not learn of Saint Paul. He never taught, that, to neglect an exact method of reasoning, would make men sounder divines. No such consequences can be deduced from his writings. Revealed religion, indeed, happily for the poor and illiterate, may be firmly believed, and vitally understood, without a very accurate judgment, or any high cultivation of the rational powers. But without both, without a thorough acquaintance with the arguments, without a knowledge of the evidences, it can never be successfully defended. Ignorance on these points would throw such a weight into the scale of scepticism, as would weaken, if it did not betray the cause of truth. In our days an ignorant teacher of religion is 'a workman that *needeth* to be ashamed.' He should carefully cultivate his reason, were it only to convince himself of its imperfection. The more he proceeds under the guidance of God's Spirit to improve his rational faculties, the more he will discover their insufficiency: and his humility striking its root more deeply as his knowledge shoots higher, he will become more profoundly thankful for that Divine revelation, which alone can satisfy the desires of his mind, and fill the cravings of his heart.

Some well-meaning instructors have pleaded, in justification of their low attainments, Saint Paul's exaltation of 'the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' 'It was,' says a learned divine, 'a mode not unusual with Saint Paul, to call a thing, not by a term descriptive of its real nature, but by a name expressive of the opinion formed of it by the world, and of the effects produced by it.'—In calling the Gospel foolishness, therefore, he only adopted the language of the Greeks, its Pagan enemies. It was 'the natural man,' to whom the things of the Spirit of God were foolishness. The expression, therefore, offers no apology for nonsense, no plea for ignorance. However, the humility of Paul might lead him to depreciate 'the wisdom of his own words,' he has left us the means of knowing that they were of the very first excellence. He depreciates, it is true, all eloquence, whether true or false, which was adopted as a substitute 'for the Cross of Christ.' He would indeed reprobate the idea of loading a discourse with ornaments, which might draw the attention of the audience from the Saviour to the preacher, which by its splendour might cast into shade the object he was bound to reveal; which might throw into the back ground that Cross which should ever be the prominent figure. But though, in establishing the doctrine of the Cross, God accomplished a promise of long standing, and frequent repetition that he would 'destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent,' yet there is no promise that ignorance or folly shall be erected on the ruins of wisdom; the promise runs, that the wisdom from above shall supersede the pride of human wisdom.

One of the fundamental truths which the apostle labours to establish, is, that the attainment of Divine knowledge, progress in holiness, conquest over sin, with all other spiritual gains, are only to be effected by the power of the Spirit of God. This doctrine, the importance of which he every where intimates, he more explicitly teaches in the eighth chapter of Romans. This conviction, which he felt deeply, he paints forcibly.—Yet, though insisted on with such frequency and emphasis, many receive this as a speculative dogma, instead of a highly practical truth. Many distrust the reality of this power, or if they allow its existence, they disbelieve its agency.

This tenet, however, so slightly regarded, is in every part of the New Testament, not barely noticed by allusion, but incessantly either peremptorily asserted, or constantly assumed. Would the apostle repeatedly refer us, as the only deliverer from sin, to an ideal person! Would he mock us by a bare statement of such a power, and an unmeaning promise of such a deliverance, without directing us how it is to be obtained? The fervent habitual prayer of faith is the mean suggested. It is rational to suppose that spiritual aid must be attained by a spiritual act. God is a spirit. Spirit and truth are the requisites expected in his worshippers.—Though this doctrine is insisted on not less than *twelve times* in this chapter only, there is not one tenet of Christianity, in the adoption of which, the generality are more reluctant.

It is unreasonable for us to say, we disbelieve the possibility of the operation of the Holy Spirit, because we do not understand when, or in what manner it acts, while we remain in such complete ignorance how our own spirits act within ourselves. It is proof sufficient, that we see its result, that we perceive the effect of this mysterious operation, in the actual change of the human heart.—Our sense of our internal weakness, must convince us, that it is not effected by any power of our own. The humble cannot but feel this truth, the ingenuous cannot but acknowledge it. Let us be assured, that Infi-

nite Wisdom, which knows how we are constituted, and what are our wants, knows how his own Spirit assists those who earnestly implore its aid.

Saint Paul powerfully inculcates that new and spiritual worship which was so condescendingly and beautifully taught by the Divine Teacher, at the well of Sychar, when he declared that the splendours of the Temple worship, hitherto performed exclusively in one distinguished place, should be abolished, and the cumbrous ceremonies and fatiguing forms of the Jewish ritual set aside, to make way for a purer mode of adoration; when the contrite heart was to supersede the costly sacrifice, and God should be worshipped in a way more suited to his spiritual nature.*

Yet, even here, the wise moderation of Paul is visible. He did not manifest his dislike of one extreme point by flying to the antipodes of opposition: when ostentatious rites were pronounced to be no longer necessary, he did not adopt, like some other reformers, the contrary excess of irregularity and confusion. While the internal principle was the great concern, the outward appendage must be decorous. To keep the exterior 'decent' and 'orderly,' was emblematical of the purity and regularity within!

While Paul's severe reproof of the confusion and irregularities, which disgraced the Church of Corinth, proves him to be a decided enemy to the distempers of spiritual vanity and enthusiasm; he does not, like a worldly reprover, seize the occasion given by their imprudence to treat with levity the power of religion itself; he does not lay hold on the error he condemns for a pretence to deride true zeal, and to render ridiculous the gifts which had been indecently abused. On the contrary, he observes how improperly these gifts and supernatural powers had been used by some on whom they were conferred; who, he laments, were more anxious to eclipse each other in these showy distinctions, than to convert them to the purposes of practical use and excellence; advises, that 'spiritual gifts' may be directed to their true end; 'that he may excel to the edifying of the Church;' gently reminds the offenders that they themselves were nothing more than vehicles and organs of the operation of the Spirit. While he insinuates that, were these miraculous powers their sole distinction, it might be doubtful by what specific mark to recognize in them the genuine Christian; he removes the difficulty, by showing them there *was a more excellent way*, by which they might most indisputably make out their title. This 'way,' which is now as it was then, the discriminating characteristic of the true believer, is Charity; all the properties of which he describes, not for their instructions only, but for ours also.

If the apostle has here, on the one hand, furnished no example or apology for enthusiasm and eccentricity; if the solidity of his piety, and the sobriety of his mind, are uniformly opposed to the unprofitable fervours of fanaticism, both in doctrine and conduct, yet on the other hand his life and writings are quite as little favourable to a more formidable, because a less suspected and more common evil,—we mean indifference. Coldness and inefficiency, indeed, are, in the estimation of some persons, reputable, or at least safe qualities, and often obtain the honourable name of Prudence; but to Saint Paul it was not enough that nothing wrong was done; he considered it reproach sufficient that nothing was done.

He sometimes intrenches himself in the honest severity which his integrity compels him to exercise against the opposers of vital Christianity, by adducing some pointed censure against them from men of their own party or country. For instance, when he condemns, in his letter to their new bishop, Titus, the luxurious, avaricious, and slothful Cretans, he corroborates the truth of his testimony by the authority of one of their own poets, or prophets. These slow sensualists, these indulgers of appetite, these masters of ceremonies, he not only stigmatizes himself, but adds to his pagan quotation, 'This witness is true.' And it may be adduced as a striking instance of his discriminating mode of church government, that this wise ecclesiastical ruler, who had before exhorted Timothy, the bishop of another Church, to 'be gentle unto all men, meekly instructing those who oppose themselves,' now directs Titus to 'rebuke sharply' these temporizing teachers, and unholy livers.

He saw that a grave and sedate indolence, investing itself with the respectable attribute of moderation, eats out the very heart's core of piety. He knew that these somnolent characters communicate the repose which they enjoy; that they excite no alarm, because they feel none. Their tale of observances is regularly brought in; their list of forms is completely made out. Forms, it is true, are valuable things, when they are 'used as a dead hedge to secure the quick;' but here the observances are rested in; here the forms are the whole of the fence. The dead fence is not considered as a protection; but a substitute. The teacher and the taught, neither disturbing nor disturbed, but soothing and soothed, reciprocate civilities, exchange commendations. If little good is done, it is well; if no offence is given, it is better; if no superfluity of zeal be imputed, it is best of all. The Apostle felt what the Prophet expressed,—'My people love to have it so.'

Perhaps the sum and substance of the duties of a Christian minister, to which there is also a reference in this chapter, was never compressed into so small a compass as in his charge to his beloved Titus;*—'In all things showing *thyself a pattern of good works. In doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech.*' We see here, in a few significant words, a rule of conduct and of instruction which is susceptible of the widest expansion. The most elaborate paraphrase will add little to the substantial worth of this brief monition. Every instructor must furnish his own practical commentary by transferring into his life the pattern, and into his preaching the precept. He adds, the sure effect of a life and doctrine so correct

* Gospel of St. John, chap. iv

* Titus, ch ii.

will be to silence calumny; the adversary of religion will be ashamed of his enmity when he sees the purity of its professor defeat all attempts to discredit him.

It is a truth, verified in every age of the church, that the doctrines which Paul preached, stood in direct opposition to the natural dispositions of man; they militated against his corrupt affections; they tended to subdue what had been hitherto invincible,—the stubborn human will; to plant self-denial where self-love had before overrun the ground. To convince of sin, to point to the Saviour, to perfect holiness, yet to exclude boasting, are the apostle's invariable objects. These topics he urges by every power of argument, by every charm of persuasion; by every injunction to the preacher, by every motive to the hearer; but these injunctions, neither argument, persuasion, nor motive, can ever render engaging.—Man loves to have his corruptions soothed; it is the object of the apostle to combat them: man would have his errors indulged; it is the object of the religion which Paul preached, to eradicate them.

Of the dislike excited against the loyal ambassadors of the Gospel, by those who live in opposition to its doctrines, our common experience furnishes us with no unapt emblem. When we have a piece of unwelcome news to report, we prepare the hearer by a soothing introduction; we break his fall by some softening circumstances; we invent some conciliatory preamble: he listens; he distrusts—but we arrive at the painful truth;—the secret is out, the preparation is absorbed in the reality, the evil remains in its full force; nothing but the painful fact is seen, heard, or felt.

'Thy news hath made thee a most ugly man.'

The apostle knew that it would afford little comfort to the humble Christian to talk of the mercy of God in the abstract, and the forgiveness of sins in vague and general terms. He persuades the believer to endeavour to obtain evidence of his own interest in this great salvation. The fountain of forgiveness may flow, but if the current reach not to us, if we have no personal interest in the offered redemption, if we do not individually seek communion with the Father of spirits, the Saviour of the world will not be our Saviour. But that he might not give false comfort, Paul, when he wishes 'peace' wishes 'grace' also; this last he always places first in order, knowing that, before the peace can be solid, it must have grace for its precursor. The character of the peace which he recommends is of the highest order of blessings. The peace which nations make with each other frequently includes no more than that they will do each other no evil; but 'the peace of God,' insures to us all that is good, by keeping our hearts and minds in the love and knowledge of the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ!

In regard to Saint Paul's ecclesiastical polity, we are aware that some persons, with a view to lower the general usefulness of his Epistles, object, that in many instances, especially in the second to the Corinthians, the apostle has limited his instructions to usages which relate only to the peculiar concerns of a particular church or individual person, and that they might have been spared in a work meant for general edification.

But these are not, as some insist, mere local controversies, obsolete disputes, with which we have no concern. Societies, as well as the individuals of whom they are composed, are much the same in all periods, and though the contentions of the churches which he addressed might differ something in matter, and much in form and ceremony, from those of modern date yet the spirit of division, of animosity, of error, of opposition, with which all churches are more or less infected, will have such a common resemblance in all ages, as may make us submit to take a hint or a caution even from topics which may seem foreign to our concerns; and it adds to the value of Saint Paul's expostulation, that they may be made in some degree applicable to other cases.—His directions are minute, as well as general, so as scarcely to leave any of the incidents of life, or the exigencies of society, totally unprovided for.

There are, it is obvious, certain things which refer to particular usages of the general church at its first institution, which no longer exist. There are frequent references to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and other circumstances, which though they have now ceased, are of great importance, as connected with its history, and assisting in its first formation; and the writer who had neglected to have recorded them would have been blameable, and the Epistles which had not alluded to them would have been imperfect.

While the apostle made ample provisions, such as the existing case required, or rather permitted, he did not absolutely legislate, as to external things, for any church, wisely leaving Christianity at liberty to incorporate herself with the laws of any country into which she might be introduced; and while the doctrines of the new religion were precise, distinct, and definite, its ecclesiastical character was of that generalized nature which would allow it to mix with any form of national government. This was a likely means both to promote its extension, and to prevent it from imbibing a political temper, or a spirit of interference with the secular concerns of any country.

The wonder is, that the work is so little local, that it savours so little of Antioch or Jerusalem, of Philippi or Corinth; but that almost all is of such general application: relative circumstances did indeed operate, but they always operated subordinately.—The Epistle to the Ephesians is not marked with one local peculiarity. There is not a single deduction to be made from the universal applicableness of this elegant and powerful epitome of the Gospel.

Saint Paul belongs not particularly to the period in which he lived, but is equally the property of each successive race of beings. Time does not diminish their interest in him. He is as fresh to every century as to his own; and the truths he preaches will be as intimately connected with that age which shall precede the dissolution of the world, as that in which he wrote. The sympathies of the real believer will always be equally awakened by doctrines which

will equally apply to their conscienees, by prineiples which will always have a referencc to their practice, by promises whieh will always earry eonsolation te their hearts. By the Christians of all countries Paul will be considered as a eosmopolite, and by those of all ages as a eontemporary. Even when he addresses individuals, his point of view is mankind. He looked to the world as his scene, and to collective man as the actor.

CHAP. X.

The Style and Genius of Saint Paul.

Though Saint Paul frequently alludes to the variety of his sufferings, yet he never dwells upon them. He does not take advantage of the liberty so allowable in friendly letters—that of endeavouring to excite eompassion by those minute details of distress, of which, but for their relation in the Acts of the Apostles, wc should have been mainly ignorant.

How would any other writer than the Apostle have interwoven a full statement of his trials with his instructions, and how would he have indulged an egotism, not only so natural and so pardonable, but which has been so acceptable in those good men who have given us histories of their own life and times. That intermixture, however, which excites so livcly an interest, and is so proper in Clarendon and Baxter, would have been misplaced here. It would have served to gratify curiosity, but might not seem to eomport with the grave plan of instruction adopted by the apostle; whilst it comes with admirable grace from Saint Luke, his companion in travel.

Saint Paul's manner of writing will be found in every way worthy of the greatness of his subjeet. His powerful and diversified charaeter of mind seems to have combined the separate excellences of all the other sacred authors—the loftiness of Isaiah, the devotion of David, the pathos of Jeremiah, the vehemenee of Ezekiel, the didaetic gravity of Moses, the elevated morality and practieal good sense, though somewhat highly eoloured, of Saint James; tho sublime conceptions and deep views of Saint John, the noble energies and burning zeal of St. Peter. To all these he added his own strong argumentative powers, depth of thought and intensity of feeling. In every single departmcnt he was eminently gifted; so that what Livy said of Cato might with far greater truth have been asscrted of Paul,—that you would think him born for the single thing in which he was engaged.

We have observed in an early chapter, that in the Evangelists the naked majesty of truth refused to owe any thing to the artifices of composition. In Paul's Epistles a due, though less strict degrce of simplieity is observed; differing in style from the other as the eomment from the text, a letter from a history; taking the same ground as to doctrine, devotion, and dutv, yet branching out into a wider range, breaking the subject into mere parts, and giving results instead of facts.

Though more at liberty, Paul makes a sober use of his privilege; though never ambitious of ornament, his style is as much varied as his subject, and always adapted to it. He is by turns vehement and tender, and sometimes both at once; impassioned, and didactic; now pursuing his point with a logical exaetness, now disdaining the rules, of which he was a master; often making his noble negleet more impressivc than the most correet arrangement, his irregularity more touehing than the most lucid order. He is often abrupt, and sometimes obseure: his reasoning, though generally clear, is, as the best critics allow, sometimes involved, perhaps owing to the suddenness of his transitions, the rapidity of his ideas, the sensibility of his soul.

But eomplieated as his meaning may occasionally appear, all his complications are eapablc of being analyzed into prineiples; so that from his most intrieate trains of reasoning, the most unlearned reader may select an unconneeted maxim of wisdom, a position of piety, an aphorism of virtue, easy from its brevity, intelligible from its elearness, and valuable from its weight.

An apparent, though not unpleasing, disconnection in his sentences is sometimes found to arise from the absence of the conjunetive parts of speeeh. He is so affluent in ideas, the images which erowd in upen him are so thiek-set; that he could not stop their course while he might tie them together. This absence of the connecting links, which in a meaner writer might have induced a want of perspicuity, adds energy and force to the expression of so spirited and clear-sighted a writer as our apostle. In the sixth chapter of the second of Corinthians, thore are six eonseeutive verses without one eonjunetion. Such a partiele would have enfeebled the spirit, without clearing the sense. Tho variety whieh these verses, all making up but one period, exhibit, the mass of thought, the diversity of objeet, the impetuosity of march, make it impossible to read them without eatching something of the fervour with whieh they are written. They seem to set the pulse in motion with a corresponding quickness; and without amplifieation seem to expand the mind of the reader into all the immensity of space and time.

Nothing is diffuscd into weakness. If his eoneiseness may be thought, in a very few instanees, to take something from his clearness, it is more than made up in foree. Condensed as his thoughts are, the inexhaustible instructions that may be dedueed from them, prove at what expansion they are susceptible. His compression has an energy, his imagery a spirit, his diction an impetuosity, whieh art would in vain labour to mend. His straight-forward sense makes his way to tho heart more surely than theirs, who go out of their road for ornament. He never interrupts the race to pick up the golden bait.

Our apostle, when he has not leisure for reflection himself, almost by impereeptible methods invites his reader to reflect. When he appears only to skim a subject, he will suggest ample food for long-dwelling meditation. Every

sentence is pregnant with thought, is abundant in instruction. Witness the many thousands of sermons which have sprung from these comparatively few, but most prolific seeds. Thus, if he does not visibly pursue the march of eloquence by the critic's path, he never fails to attain its noblest ends. He is full without diffuseness, copious without redundance. His eloquence is not a smooth and flowing oil, which lubricates the surface, but a sharp instrument which makes a deep incision. It penetrates to the dissection of the inmost soul, 'to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.'

The numerous and long digressions often found, and sometimes complained of, in this great writer, never make him lose sight of the point from which he sets out, and the mark to which he is tending. From his most discursive flights he never fails to bring home some added strength to the truth with which he begins; and when he is longest on the wing, or loftiest in his ascent, he comes back to his subject enriched with additional matter, and animated with redoubled vigour. This is particularly exemplified in the third chapter of the Ephesians, of which the whole is one entire parenthesis, eminently abounding in effusions of humility, holiness, and love, and in the rich display of the Redeemer's grace.

In the prosecution of any discourse, though there may appear little method, he has frequently, besides the topic immediately in hand, some point to bring forward, not directly, but in an incidental, yet most impressive manner. At the moment when he seems to wander from the direct line of his pursuit, the object which he still has had in his own view, unexpectedly starts up before that of his hearer. In the recapitulation of the events of his life before Festus and Agrippa, when nothing of doctrine appears to be on his mind; he suddenly breaks out, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?' He then resumes his narrative as rapidly as he had flown off from it; but returns to his doctrine at the close, with the additional circumstance, that 'Christ was the first that should rise from the dead;'—as if, having before put the question in the abstract, he had been since paving the way for the establishment of the fact.

Saint Paul is happy in a mode of brief allusion, and in the art of awakening recollection by hints. It is observable often, how little time he wastes in narrative, and how much matter he presses into a few words; 'Ye, brethren, have suffered the like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men,—forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved; to fill up their sins always—for the wrath is come upon them to the utmost.' What a quantity of history does this sketch present! What a picture of their character, their crimes, and their punishment!

Nor does this brevity often trench on his explicitness. In the fifth chapter of the first Thessalonians, from the fourteenth to the twentieth verse, there are no fewer than seventeen fundamental, moral, and religious monitions, comprising almost all the duties of a Christian life in the space of a few lines. The selection of his words is as apt, as his enumeration of duties is just. He *beseeches* his converts 'to know them that are over them, and very highly to esteem them in love for their works' sake;' while to the performance of every personal, social, and religious duty, he *exhorts* them.

The correctness of his judgment appears still more visibly in the aptness and propriety of all his allusions, metaphors, and figures. In his epistle to the Hebrews, he illustrates and enforces the new doctrine by reasonings drawn from a reference to the rites, ceremonies, and economy of the now obsolete dispensation; sending them back to the records of their early Scriptures. Again, he does not talk of the Isthmian games to the Romans, nor to the Greeks of Adoption. The latter term he judiciously uses to the Romans, to whom it was familiar, and explains, by the use of it, the doctrines of the grace of God in their redemption, their adoption as his children, and their 'inheritance with the saints in light;' on the other hand, the illustration borrowed from the rigorous abstinence which was practised by the competitors in the Grecian games; to fit them for athletic exercises, would convey to the most illiterate inhabitant of Achaia, a lively idea of the subjugation of appetite required in the Christian combatant. The close of this last mentioned analogy by the apostle, opens a large field for instruction, by a brief but beautiful comparison, between the value and duration of the fading garland worn by the victorious Greek, with the incorruptible crown of the Christian conqueror.

But whether it be a metaphor or illustration, or allusion, he seldom fails to draw from it some practical inference for his own humiliation. In the present case he winds up the subject with a salutary fear, in which all who are engaged in the religious instruction of others are deeply interested. So far is he from self-confidence or self-satisfaction, because he lives in the constant habit of improving others, that he adduces the very practice of this duty as a ground of caution to himself. He appropriates to himself a general possibility, 'lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

Another metaphor, to which for its peculiarity we cannot help making a distinct reference, occurs in the twelfth chapter of the first of Corinthians. The figure with which he there instructs the Church of Corinth in the nature, use, and variety of spiritual gifts, whilst it bears a strong resemblance to the celebrated apologue with which Menenius Agrippa appeased the tumult of the Roman populace in the infancy of the Consular government, is still much superior to it. Saint Paul reproves their dissentions in a long chain of argument, where he illustrates the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in his distribution of gifts, by a similitude taken from the component parts of the human body; which, though distinct and various, make up by union one harmonious whole. He explains their incorporation into Christ by the interest which the body has in the

several members, each of which by its specific office contributes to the general good. He proves the excellence of the dispensation to consist in that very variety which had produced the contention; and shows that, had the same powers been given to all, the union would have been broken as each portion would have been useless in a state of detachment from the rest, which now contributed to the general organization of the human frame.

As an orator, Paul unquestionably stands in the foremost rank. When the renowned Athenian so 'wielded the fierce democracy,' as to animate with one common sentiment the whole assembly against Philip; when his great rival stirred up the Roman senate against their oppressors, and by the power of his eloquence made Cataline contemptible, and Anthony detestable; they had every thing in their favour. Their character was established: each held a distinguished office in the state. They stood on the vantage-ground of the highest rank and reputation. When they spoke, admiration stood waiting to applaud. Their characters commanded attention. Their subject ensured approbation. Each, too, had the advantage of addressing his own friends, his own countrymen —men of the same religious and political habits with themselves. Before they started, they had already pre-occupied half the road to success and glory.

Now turn to Paul!—A stranger, poor, persecuted, unprotected, unsupported—despised before-hand, whether he were considered as a Jew or a Christian; solitary, defenceless, degraded even to chains—yet did he make the prejudiced king vacillate in his opinion, the unjust judge tremble on his seat. The Apostle of the Gentiles owed none of his success to an appeal to the corrupt passions of his audience. Demosthenes and Cicero, it must be confessed, by their arguments and their eloquence, but not a little also by their railing and invective, kindled strong emotions in the minds of their respective audiences. Now these vituperations, it must be remembered, were applied to other persons, not to the hearers,—and men find a wonderful facility in admiring satire not directed at themselves. But in the case of Saint Paul, the very persons addressed were at once the accused and the judges. The auditors were to apply the searching truths to their own hearts; to look inward on the mortifying spectacle of their own errors and vices: so that the apostle had the feelings of the hearers completely against him, whilst the Pagan orator had those of his audience already on his side.

To crown all, Saint Paul has nobly exemplified the rule of Quinctilian. He owed the best part of his oratory to his being a 'good man,' as well as a good speaker. 'Otherwise,' says that great critic, 'though the orator may amuse the imagination, he will never reach the heart.'

Conviction was the soul of his eloquence. He has no hesitation in his religious discussions. Whenever he summoned the attributes of his mind to council, decision always presided. His doctrines had a fixed system. There was nothing conjectural in his scheme. His mind was never erratic for want of a centre. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' is the sun of his system, and round this centre every doctrine issuing from his lips, every grace beaming in his soul, moved harmoniously. Whilst he did not, like the exploded philosophy, invert order, by making the orb of day dependent on the lesser fires, which owe to him whatever light and heat they possess; he did not shrink, like the restorer of an astronomical truth, from the most decisive and effectual avowal of his opinions. It is curious to observe that both these persons shared a similar fate. The astronomer was rewarded for his discoveries with being thrown into prison by a pontiff of Rome; for the diffusion of moral light, the apostle was thrown into prison by an emperor of Rome. But mark, in the sequel, the superior influence of revealed truth over the conduct, to that of the clearest and best founded deductions of human reason. The philosopher was irresolute; the apostle persevered. Copernicus recanted what he knew to be truth, and was set free; Paul disdained liberty upon such terms and was put to death.

This resolute avowal, this predominant conviction of the sublimest of truths, enabled Saint Paul to throw into his eloquence a heart and a life unknown to other orators; 'as a dying man, he spoke to dying men;' and pleaded to the feelings of immortal beings for the life of their souls Others have selected noble objects, objects well worthy their genius and their zeal,—the love of their country, liberty, and life. Paul embraced the same topics, but how ennobled in their nature! He taught his hearers 'to desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.' He showed them 'the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.' He pointed them to 'life everlasting.'

In the various counsels or reproofs founded upon these divine doctrines, can we be surprised at the frequent interruption of an ejaculation or an apostrophe which he seems wholly unable to repress? Often do we participate those feelings which, as it were, break in upon his most subdued moments, and impel him to magnify that name, which is above every name, with ascription of glory, and honour and praise, and sainted adoration: With a kindred joy and elevation of soul, we seem to make even the most highly wrought devotional and practical effusions of so great a writer our own: and so far from coldly condemning what we almost believe our own, we realize something of the observation of the finest critic of antiquity, 'that when the mind is raised by the true sublime, it rejoices and glories as if itself had produced what it had so much delight in contemplating.' 'No real Christian can read the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, without being impressed and roused by it, as by the sound of a trumpet.'*

David, between whose temper and genius, and those of Saint Paul, there seems to have been a great resemblance, frequently manifests the same inextinguishable energy of soul. His heart, like that of the Apostle, is hot within him; the fire burns while he is musing. Many of the Psalms under such an influence become only one varied

* Macknight's Preface.

strain of laudatory prayer. In the nineteenth, for instance, he breaks out in admiration of the Divine law, almost to appearance on a sudden, and in such an inexhaustible diversity of expression, as if he could never unburden the fulness of his overflowing heart. He describes it in no less than six different forms of perfection: and with every form, still resembling his great fellow saint of after ages, he connects a practical deduction. Thus by an infinite variety he proves that his mental opulence is above tautology, and at the same time shows that spiritual riches should be devoted to moral purposes. 'The law of the Lord so extolled converts the soul,—gives wisdom to the simple,—rejoices the heart,—gives light to the eyes,—is not only true, but righteous altogether.'

If Paul indulges the glowing expression of his own gratitude, it is to communicate the sacred flame to those he addresses; if he triumphs in 'the enlargement of his own heart,' it is because he hopes by the infection of a holy sympathy to enlarge theirs. In catching, however, the sacred flame, let us never forget that, in his warmest addresses, in his most ardent expressions of grateful love to his God and his Saviour, he never loses sight of that soberness and gravity which becomes both his subject and his character. It is *the King eternal, immortal, invisible —the blessed and only potentate—King of kings, Lord of lords,—He who hath immortality—who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto,—He who hath honour and power everlasting*, to whom, and of whom, he feels himself to speak.

May we venture to express a wish, that some persons of more piety and discernment, among whom there are those who value themselves on being more particularly the disciples of Saint Paul, would always imitate his chastised language. When the apostle pours out the fulness of his heart to his Redeemer, every expression is as full of veneration as of love. His freedom is a filial freedom, while *their* devout effusions are sometimes mixed with adjectives, which betrays a familiarity bordering on irreverence.*

'If I am a father, where is mine honour: if I am a master, where is my fear?' They may indeed say with truth that they are invited to come *boldly* to the throne of grace. But does not the very word Throne imply majesty on the one part, and prostration on the other? Is not 'God manifest in the flesh' sometimes treated with a freedom, I had almost said a fondness, in which the divine part of his nature seems to be swallowed up in the human? Coarseness of whatever kind, may, it is true, be palliated by piety, but is never countenanced by it: it has no affinity to piety; it is only as the iron and the clay at the foot of the magnificent image, and is just so far removed from the true refinement and golden sanctity of taste, which will be learned by a due study of the first of models. If the persons so offending should plead warmth of affection, their plea will be admitted as valid, if in this feeling they can prove their superiority to their great master. In our own admirable church service, this scriptural soberness of style is most judiciously adopted, and uniformly maintained. Portions of it are indeed addressed to the Second Person in the blessed Trinity; but we look in vain for any familiar expression, any distinguishing appellative.

Much less do Saint Paul's writings present an example, to another and more elegant class, the learned speculatists of the German school, as recently presented to us by their eloquent and accomplished eulogist. Some of these have fallen into the opposite extreme of religious refinement; too airy to be tangible, too mystic to be intelligible. The apostle's religion is not like theirs, a shadowy sentiment, but a vital principle; not a matter of taste, but of conviction, of faith, of feeling. It is not a fair idea, but a holy affection. The deity at which they catch, is a gay and gorgeous cloud; Paul's is the Fountain of Light. His religion is definite and substantial, and more profound than splendid. It is not a panegyric on Christianity, but a homage to it.

He is too devout to be ingenious, too earnest to be fanciful, too humble to be inventive. His sober mind could discern no analogy between the sublime truths of Christianity and 'the fine arts.' Nor would he have compared the awful mysteries of the religion of Jesus with those of 'Free Masonry,' any more than he would have run a laboured parallel with the mysteries of Eleusis, or the Bona Dea. Nor does he love to illustrate the word of God by any thing but his works. His truth hath no shades; in Him, whatever is right is absolute. Nor does he ever make error perform the work of truth, by ascribing to 'enthusiasm' any of the good effects of religion. In the celestial armory of Christianity no such spiritual weapons as enthusiasm or error are to be found.

Had the Apostle placed the doctrines of revelation as congenial associates with the talent of poets and artists, he would have thought not only that it was a degradation of the principle of our faith, but an impeachment of the divine dispensations. God would have all men to be saved; Christ would have the gospel preached to every creature. Now if we compare the very small minority of ethereal spirits, who are fed by genius, who subsist on the luxuries of imagination, who are nurtured by music, who revel in poetry and sculpture, with the innumerable multitudes who have scarcely heard whether there be any such thing,—such a limited, such a whimsical, such an unintelligible, such an unattainable Christianity, would rob the mass of mankind of all present comfort, of all future hope. Paul would have thought it a mockery, when the Holy Spirit could alone help their infirmities, to have sent them to the Muses. To refer them to the statuary when they were craving for the bread of life, would be literally 'giving them stones for bread.' Nor would he have derided the wants of those who were 'thirsting for living water,' by sending him to the fountain of Aganippe.

To be more serious:—To have placed the vast majority of the human race out of the reach of privileges which Christianity professes to have made commensurate with the very ends of the earth, and to have adapted to every rational in-

* This remark applies more particularly to certain Hymns written in a very devout strain, but with a devotion rather amatory than reverential.

habitant on its surface, would have been as base and treacherous, unjust and narrow, as the totality of the actual design is vast and glorious.

Even had those few eminent men who ruled the empire of intellect in Greece and Rome, attained, by the influence of their philosophical doctrines, to perfection in practice, (which was far from being the case,) that would neither have advanced the general faith, nor improved the popular morals. In like manner, had Christianity limited its principles, and their consequent benefits, to evangelists and apostles, or to men of genius, how insignificant would have been her value in comparison of the effects of that boundless benevolence which commands the Gospel to be preached to all, without any distinction of rank or ability. Through this blessed provision the poorest Christian, rich in faith, can equally with Boyle or Bacon relish the beauty of holiness in the pages of Saint Paul, though he may not be rich enough in taste to discover its 'picturesque beauties,' as exhibited in the pages of some modern philosophic theologians.

Ours is a religion, not of ingenuity, but of obedience. As we must not omit any thing which God has commanded, so we must not invent devices which he does *not* command. The talent of a certain Lacedæmonian was not accepted as an excuse, when he added to his warlike instrument a string more than the state allowed. Instead of being commended for his invention, he was cashiered for his disobedience: so far from being rewarded for improving his music, he was punished for infringing the law.

Much were it to be wished, that these deep thinkers and brilliant writers, to whom we allude with every consideration for their talents, would make their immense mental riches subservient to their spiritual profit: and as Solon made his commercial voyages the occasion of amassing his vast intellectual treasures, so that *they* would consecrate their literary wealth, and devote their excursions into the regions of fancy to the acquisition of the one pearl of great price.

Too often persons of fine genius, to whom Christianity begins to present itself, do not so much seek to penetrate its depths, where alone they are to be explored, in the unerring word of God, as in their own pullulating imaginations. Their taste and their pursuits have familiarized them with the vast, and the grand, and the interesting: and they think to sanctify these in a way of their own. The *feeling of the Infinite* in nature, and the beautiful in art; the flights of poetry, of love, of glory, alternately elevate their imagination, and they denominate the splendid combination, Christianity. But 'the new cloth' will never assort with 'the old garment.'

These elegant spirits seem to live in a certain lofty region in their own minds, where they know the multitude cannot soar after them; they derive their grandeur from this elevation, which separates them with the creature of their imagination, from all ordinary attributes, and all associations of daily occurrence. In this middle region, too high for earth, and too low for heaven; too refined for sense, and too gross for spirit; they keep a magazine of airy speculations, and shining reveries, and puzzling metaphysics; the chief design of which is to drive to a distance, the profane vulgar; but the real effect to separate themselves and their system from all intercourse with the wise and good.

God could never intend we should disparage his own gift, his highest natural gift, intellectual excellence. But knowing that those who possessed it, would be sufficiently forward, not only to value the talent, but to overvalue themselves for possessing it, he knew also that its possessors would require rather repression than excitement. Accordingly, we do not recollect an eulogy on mere intellectual ability either in the Old or the New Testament. In the Old, indeed, there is the severe censure of a Prophet on its vain exercise; 'thy wisdom and thy knowledge have perverted thee;' and in the New, the only mention of 'high imaginations,' is accompanied with an injunction, 'to cast them down,' and this in order to the great and practical end of 'bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'

Saint Paul was deeply sensible of the necessity of circumscribing the passions, the powers, and the genius of men within due limits. He knew that they were not to be trusted to their own operation, without positive institutions, fixed laws, prescribed bounds. To subdue the pride and independence of the human heart, he knew to be no less requisite than to tame the sensual appetites. He was aware, that to fill the imagination with mere pictures of heroic virtue would not suffice for a creature like man, under the influence of that disorderly and inflammable faculty, without the infusion of holy habits, and the prescription of specific duties and defined rules. In fine, the discipline of Paul learns not so much to give play to his fancy, as to submit his will; and the first question which seems presented in his pages is not this, 'How bright are thy conceptions?' but 'How readest thou?'

The subject is too important, as a matter of caution, not to be placed in every possible light. Let us remember then that admiration is not conviction. There is something in perfection of every kind, which lays hold on a heart glowing with strong feelings, and a mind imbued with true taste. On this ground, even Rousseau could be the occasional eulogist of Christianity. He could institute a comparison between the son of Sophroniscus and the Son of Mary, with a pen, which seems plucked by a fallen spirit from a seraph's wing. His fine imagination was fired with the sublime of Christianity, as it would have been with a dialogue of Plato, a picture of Raffaelle, or any exhibition of ideal beauty.

Longinus, a still more accomplished critic in intellectual beauty than Rousseau, amongst the various illustrations of his doctrine in his beautiful work, quotes the Almighty fiat at the creation, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' as a perfect instance of the sublime. He calls it 'a just idea, and a noble expression of the power of God.' Yet, though struck with this passage of the Jewish legislator, whom he coolly calls, 'no ordinary person, he was satisfied with

the beauty of the sentiment without examining into that truth which is the spring and fountain of all beauty. Though he lived so late as the third century, yet he does not appear to have inquired into the truth of the Christian revelation; and thus but too lamentably demonstrated, that the taste may give its most favourable verdict to a system which had yet made no impression on the heart.

Saint Paul found in the wants of man something that could not be supplied; in his sorrows, something that could not be consolated; in his lapse, something that could not be restored by elegant speculation or poetic rapture. He found that the wounds inflicted by sin could not be healed by the grace of composition; and that nothing but the grace of the Gospel could afford a remedy adequate to the demand. Let us, then, give our willing admiration to every species of true genius. Let us retain our taste for what is really excellent even in heathen models. But when called upon to identify the impressions of taste with the infusions of piety, let us boldly reply with the Prophet, 'What has Ephraim to do any more with Idols?'

CHAP. XI.

Saint Paul's Tenderness of Heart.

Among the peculiarities of Christianity, it is one of the most striking, that they who, in Scripture language, love not the world, nor the things of the world, are yet the persons in it who are farthest from misanthropes. They love the beings of whom the world is composed, better than he who courts and flatters it. They seek not its favour nor its honours, but they give a more substantial proof of affection,—they seek its improvement, its peace, its happiness, its salvation.

If ever man, on this ground, had a pre-eminent claim to the title of philanthropist, that man is the Apostle Paul. The warmth of his affections, as exhibited in a more general view, in the narrative of Saint Luke, and the tenderness of his feelings, as they appear more detailed throughout his own Epistles, constitute a most interesting part of his very diversified character.

This truth is obvious, not only on great and extraordinary occasions, but in the common circumstances of his life, and from the usual tenor of his letters.

There are persons, not a few, who, though truly pious, defeat much of the good they intend to do, not always by a natural severity of temper, but by a repulsiveness of manner, by not cultivating habits of courtesy, by a neglect of the smaller lenient acts of kindness. They will indeed confer the obligation, but they confer it in such a manner as grieves and humbles him who receives it. In fulfilling the letter of charity, they violate its spirit. We would not willingly suspect, that if they are more averse from bestowing commendation, than from receiving it, a little envy, unsuspected by themselves, mixes with this reluctance. But be this as it may, tender spirits and feeling hearts, especially in the first stages of their religious course, require the fostering air of kindness and encouragement. They are not able to go alone, they need the soothing voice and the helping hand. They are ready to suspect that they are going wrong, if not occasionally encouraged to believe that they are going right.

History presents us with numberless instances, in which the success or the failure of great enterprises has depended, not altogether on the ability, but partly on the temper of him who conducted it. The importance of conciliatory and engaging manners is no where more strikingly illustrated than by the opposite conduct and different success of two famous Athenian generals. Plutarch observes, that though Pericles and Nicias both pursued the same end, the former, in the progress of his purpose, always won the people by his kind and insinuating address; while the latter, not employing the mild powers of persuasion, exasperated instead of winning them over, and thus commonly failed in his enterprise.

Paul's consummate knowledge of human nature, no less than his tenderness of heart, led him to encourage in his young converts early opening promise of goodness. He carefully cultivates every favourable symptom. He is 'gentle among them as a nurse cherisheth her children.' He does not expect every thing at once; he does not expect that a beginner in the ways of religion should start into instantaneous perfection. He does not think all is lost if an error is committed; he does not abandon hope, if some less happy converts are slow in their progress. He protects their budding graces, he fences his young plants till they have had time to take root; as they became strong he exposes them to the blast. If he rejoices that the hardy are more flourishing, he is glad that the less vigorous are nevertheless alive.

Characters which are great are not always amiable; the converse is equally true; in Saint Paul there is an union of both qualities. He condescends to the inferior distresses, and consults the natural feelings of his friends, as much as if no weightier cares pressed on his mind. There is scarcely a more lovely part of his character, though it may be less striking to the common eyes, as being more tender than great than the gentleness exhibited to his Corinthian converts; where he is anxious before he appears among them again that any breach might be healed, and every painful feeling done away, which his sharp reproof of an offending individual might have excited. He would not have the joyfulness of their meeting overshadowed by any remaining cloud.

Though he expresses himself in the most feeling manner, lest he might have given them pain by his severe reproofs in a preceding letter, yet instantly the predominating integrity of his mind leads him to take comfort in the reflection, that this temporary sorrow had produced the most salutary effects on them who felt it. His rejoicing that the very sorrow he had excited was a religious sorrow,—his reflections on the beneficial results of this affliction,—on the repentance it had produced, the distinction between this and worldly sorrow,—his

generous energy in enumerating the several instances in which this good effect had appeared; 'yea, what carefulness is wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear,' and the animating conclusion, that 'in all things they had proved themselves to be clear in the matter;' all afford a proof of his being on the watch to lay hold of any possible occasion, on which to build instruction, as well as to graft consolation.

No one ever possessed more nearly in perfection, the virtuous art of softening the severity of the censure he is obliged to inflict, no one ever more combined flexibility of manner with inflexibility of principle. He takes off the edge of reproof by conveying it negatively. To give a single instance out of many, when he thought some of his converts had acted improperly, instead of saying I blame you, he adopts a mitigating phrase, 'I praise you not.' This address would prepare them to receive with more temper the censure to which it is an introduction.

Of this Christian condescension each successive example furnishes us with a most engaging and beautiful model for our own conduct. With what deep regret does he allude to the necessity under which he had been of animadverting severely on the atrocious instance of misconduct above-mentioned! With what truth and justice does he make it appear that reproofs, which are so painful to the censor, are a more certain evidence of friendship, than commendations, which it would have given to him as much joy to have bestowed, as to them to have received! An important admonition to all, to those especially whose more immediate concern it is to watch over the conduct of others, that though this most trying duty should never be neglected by them, yet that the integrity which obliges them to point out faults, should be exercised in a manner so feeling as to let the offender see, that they have no pleasure in adopting harsh measures; of this truth they give the surest proof by the joy with which, like the apostle, they welcome the returning penitent back to virtue.

Observe the delicacy of his distinctions,—he wrote to them *out of much affliction and anguish of heart;* not that he wished to grieve them by a display of his own sorrow, but that they might judge by it *of the abundant love he had for them.* Nor does he, as is the vulgar practice, blame a whole community for the faults of individuals: *I am grieved but in part, that I may not overcharge you all.* Mark his justice in separating the offending party from the mass. Is not this a hint against an indiscriminate mode of attack? Do we not occasionally hear one audience addressed as if it were composed entirely of saints, and another, as if all were grossly impenitent sinners?

Having received sufficient proofs of the obedience of the community in inflicting the punishment, and of the penitence of the offender in submitting to it, he was now not only anxious for his restoration, but for his comfort. He sets a most amiable example of the manner in which the contrite spirit should be cheered, and the broken heart bound up. No one was ever more studious than Saint Paul, to awaken contrition; none more eager to heal its pangs.

Want of consideration is an error into which even good men sometimes fall. They do not always enter intimately into the character and circumstances of the persons they address. Saint Paul writes to his friends like one that felt, because he partook the same fallen humanity with them: like one who was familiar with the infirmities of our common nature, who could allow for doubt and distrust, for misapprehension and error; who expected inconsistency, and was not deterred by perverseness; who bore with failure where it was not wilful, and who could reprove obduracy, without being disappointed at meeting with it. In Saint Paul, the heart of flesh was indeed substituted for the heart of stone.

Our spiritual strength is invigorated by the retrospection of our former errors.—Saint Paul's tenderness for his converts was doubtless increased by the remembrance of his own errors; a remembrance which left a compassionate feeling on his impressible heart. It never, however, led him to be guilty of that mischievous compassion of prefering the ease of his friends to their safety. He never soothed where it was his duty to reprove. He knew that integrity was the true tenderness; that a harsh truth, which might tend to save the soul, had more humanity than a palliative which might endanger it.

From this intimate knowledge of the infirmities even of good men, he had such a conviction of the possibility of relaxing in religious strictness, that he scrupled not to express his fears to his Corinthian friends, that when he came among them, 'he should not find them such as he would;' in order to soften, he divides the blame, by fearing, that 'he should be found of them such as they would not.' Knowing, too, that the temper was more under control, and irritation less easily excited, by epistolary than by verbal communication; when he expresses his fears that at their meeting he might find among them 'debates, envyings, wrath, swellings,' he tenderly apologizes for expressing his apprehensions, *because lest in conversation he might use sharpness.* In his most severe animadversions he does not speak of any with hopeless harshness. He seldom treats the bad as irreclaimable, but generally contrives to leave them some remains of credit. He seems to feel that by stripping erring men of every vestige of character, he should strip them also of every glimmering of hope, of every incitement to reformation. It is indeed almost cutting off any chance of a return to virtue, when we do not leave the offender some remnant of reputation to which he may still be led to act up. May not this preservation from despair lead to the operation of a higher principle? Though Timothy is exhorted to have no company with him who obeys not the word of Paul's Epistle, the prohibition is only in order 'that he may be ashamed;' 'yet is he not to be accounted as an enemy, but exhorted as a brother.'

As there seems to have been no church which had fallen into such important errors as that of Corinth, and consequently none where more pointed reproof was necessary, so in no Epistle is there more preparatory soothing, more conci-

latory preliminaries to the counsels or the censures he is about to communicate. He tells them that 'in every thing they are enriched,'—'that they come behind in no gift,' before he reprehends them for their contentious spirit, for their divisions, for their strifes. Thus, though the reproof would be keenly felt, it would not be met with a spirit previously exasperated—a spirit which those reprovers infallibly excite, who by indiscriminate upbraiding stir up the irascible passions at the outset, shut up every avenue to the kind affections, and thus deprive the offender of that patient calmness with which he might otherwise have profited by the reproof.

This intimate feeling of his own imperfection is every where visible. It makes him more than once press on his friends, the Christian duty of bearing one another's burdens, intimating how necessary this common principle of mutual kindness was, as they themselves had so much to call forth the forbearance of others. In his usual strain of referring to first motives, he does not forget to remind them, that it was fulfilling the law of Christ.

As the ardent zeal of Saint Paul led him into no enthusiasm, so the warmth of his affections never blinded his judgment. Religion did not dry up, as it is sometimes accused of doing, the spring of his natural feelings; his sensibility was exquisite; but the heart which felt all, was quickened by an activity which did all, and regulated by a faith which conquered all.

His sorrows and his joys, both of which were intense, never seem to have arisen from any thing which related merely to himself. His own happiness or distress were little influenced by personal considerations; the varying condition, the alternate improvement or declension of his converts alone, could sensibly raise or depress his feelings. With what anguish of spirit does he mourn over some, 'of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' Mark again his self-renouncing joy—'We are glad when we are weak and ye are strong.' Again, 'Let me rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.'

When he expressed such a feeling sense of distress, upon the interesting occasion of taking his departure for Jerusalem, 'the Holy Ghost witnessing in every city that bonds and imprisonment awaited him,'* still he felt no concern for his own safety. No: he anticipated without terror his probable reception there. With a noble disregard of all personal considerations, he exclaims, 'but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.' †

If none of these things moved him, then whence arose the sorrow he so keenly felt? It arose from no selfish cause; it was from a consideration far superior to that tender feeling, that they should meet no more, though that too he would deeply regret; it was occasioned by reflection the future condition of the church, and a prophetic view of that corruption of doctrine to which he foresaw his beloved converts would be soon exposed.

There is something singularly beautiful in the dignity, simplicity, and godly sincerity of this apostolic charge, to which we allude.—With humble confidence, he refers his audience to their own knowledge of his whole conduct. He assures them, that neither any fears of the insidious Jews, always on the watch to circumvent him, nor the hostility of the idolatrous Gentiles, always ready to oppose him, had ever driven him to withhold any important truth, any salutary admonition. He slightly touches on the two fundamental truths on which all his instructions had been built, *faith and repentance:* then he reminds them, that not satisfied with the public exercise of his function, he had practised that subsidiary and valuable method of instruction—private visits at the houses of individuals—a method equally practicable in all ages of the church; equally desirable to all who wish to gain a real acquaintance, in the intervals of public service with the necessities, the infirmities, and the sins of their respective hearers. This would enable him to perform his stated ministrations with ten-fold effect. It would initiate him into the endless variety of characters of which every audience is composed; it would enable the teacher to be more personal in his exhortations, more pointed in his reproofs, more specific in his instruction, than he could be when he addressed them in the great assembly. It would also qualify him for more extensive usefulness in those public addresses by the materials which he was thus collecting. It would be among the means also to win their affection and increase their attachment, when they saw that his zeal for their spiritual advancement was large and cordial; that he did not content himself with the stipulated scantling of bare weight duty; that he did not deal out his instruction with a legal scrupulosity, but was willing to spend, and desirous to be spent, for them.

With what a holy satisfaction did the conscience of the apostle further testify that no desire of pleasing, no fear of offending, had prevented him from delivering wholesome truths, because they might be unpalatable! What an awful intimation to every ambassador of Christ, that this indefatigable apostle, at the moment of final separation, could call on all present to testify that whatever might have been the negligence of the hearer, the preacher 'was pure from the blood of all men;' that he had never been guilty of that false tenderness, of not declaring to them the whole counsel of God! He appeals to his disinterestedness, that, so far from being influenced by any lucrative motive, he had laboured with his own hands, not only to support himself, but to assist the poor. How touching, no doubt to his hearers, was the intimation, that the same hands which had been raised for them in prayer, had been employed for their support!

This modest allusion to his own liberality, and to the personal labour which had enabled him to exercise it, was a proper parting lesson. It reminded his auditors, that no part of his re-

* Acts, xx.

† We make no apology for the repeated references to this portion of this most interesting chapter.

ligion was merely theoretical. He had, doubtless, frequently insisted on the principle; he here shows them its practical effect; in this, as in other instances, pressing home every truth he taught by every virtue he exercised.

He concludes with a powerful application to his associates in the ministry, to whom he was about to commit the care of the people. The tender grief, the grateful sympathy, the prayers, the tears, and embraces of the afflicted audience, 'sorrowing most because they should see his face no more,' bore a truer testimony to the fidelity of the preacher, than the most elaborate eulogy on his style or manner; and doubtless afforded a higher test of excellence, than any temporary effect, produced by an artificial harangue, which, while it fills the hearer with admiration of the preacher, leaves his own conscience untouched, his own heart unhumbled.

He then bequeaths, as a kind of dying legacy, the people to their ministers; affectionately exhorting the latter, first; to 'take heed to themselves,' as the only sure earnest of their taking heed to their flock, strengthening his exhortation 'to feed the church of God,' by a motive at once the most powerful and the most endearing, because *he hath purchased it with his own blood.*

In that great and terrible day of the Lord when the glorious Head of the Church shall summon the assembled universe to judgment, among the myriads who shall tremblingly await their own definitive sentence, how will the exploring eye of men and angels be turned on the more prominent and public characters, who, from rank, profession, talent, or influence, were invested with superior responsibility! What individual among these distinguished classes will be able to endure the additional load of other men's sins, brought forward to swell his personal account.

Though it is not easy to image to the mind a more touching event than this parting scene of Christian friends on the shores of Ephesus, yet there is one to come of far higher interest, that of their re-union;—that august scene, when the pastor and his flock shall appear together, at the call of the Chief Shepherd,—when the servants of the Universal Master,—'they who have sought that which was lost, and brought again that which was driven away, and bound up that which was broken, and strengthened that which was sick,'* shall deliver up to Him who laid down his life for the sheep, that flock 'which he will require at their hands.'

Yes! among the candidates for a blessed immortality will stand awfully pre-eminent the band of Christian ministers, each surrounded by 'the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer,' every one of whom had sacramentally declared, at his introduction into the fold, that he undertook the sacred office in obedience to that solemn call.† What a sound, 'Well done good and faithful servant!' to him who shall have acquitted himself of his tremendous responsibility! What a spectacle?—multitudes entering into the joy of their Lord, gratefully ascribing their opening and inconceivable felicity to the zeal, the fidelity, the prayers of their pastor. For them, to resume the beautiful metaphors of the Holy Book,—for them, *the green pastures*, into which they had conducted their flock, shall flourish in everlasting verdure; for them, *the waters of comfort, beside which they had led them*, shall flow from a source which eternity cannot exhaust, from those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore.

If this spectacle *has* a contrast, we avert our eyes from the contemplation. If even the picture is too terrible to be sketched, who could stand the possibility of its being realized?

This whole valedictory address to the elders of Ephesus combines every beauty of composition: it exhibits an energy, a devotion, a resignation, an integrity, a tenderness, which cannot be sufficiently admired. And the more intimately to touch their hearts by mixing the remembrance of the friend with the injunctions he had delivered, he not only refers them to the doctrines which he had taught, but the tears which he had shed.

There is nothing like stoical indifference. Nothing like a contempt of the sensibilities of nature, in his whole conduct; and it furnishes a proof how happily magnanimity and tenderness blend together, that as there is probably no character in history which exhibits a more undaunted heroism than that of Saint Paul, so there is perhaps not one whose tears are so frequently recorded. 'What mean ye to weep and break my heart?' is an interrogatory as intelligible to us in the character of Paul, as the heroic declaration, 'I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.' What ground, then, is there for that charge so frequently brought against persons of eminent piety, that they are destitute of natural feeling. The Old Testament Saints were striking examples of domestic tenderness.

When Paul exhorts his converts 'to stand fast in the Lord,' he declares his own participation in the blessings of this steadfastness, in terms the most endearing—'dearly beloved and longed for, my crown and joy, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved;'—as if he would add to the motives of their perseverance, the transport it would afford to himself. His very existence seems to depend on their steadfastness in piety—'for now we *live* if ye stand fast in the Lord.' Again, as a proof how dear his converts were to him, he was desirous of imparting to them *not only the Gospel of God, but also his own soul.*

The spirit of Christianity is no where more apparent than in the affectionate strain in which he adjures his Roman friends only to consent to save their own souls. One would suppose it was not the immortal happiness of others, but his own, which so earnestly engaged him. How fervently tender is his mode of obtesting them! 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God'—'I Paul by myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.'* As the representative of his master, he implores of man the reconciliation for which it would be natural to expect that man himself, whose own concern it is, should be the solicitor.

Saint Paul's zeal for the spiritual welfare of

* Ezekiel, ch. xxxiv. 16.
† See the Ordination Service.
* Romans xii. 1.

whole communities, did not swallow up his ardent attachment to individuals; nor did his regard to their higher interest lead him to overlook their personal sufferings. He deseends to give particular advice to one friend* respecting the management of his health. In his grief for the sickness of another,† and his joy at his recovery, he does not pretend to a feeling purely disinterested, but gratefully acknowledges that his joy was partly for his own sake,' 'lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow.' These soft touches of sympathy for individuals particularly dear to him, in a man so like-minded with Christ, in the instanees of Lazarus and John, are a sufficient refutation of the whimsieal assertion of a lively genius; that particular friendships are hostile to the spirit of Christianity.‡

The capacious heart of this blessed apostle was so large as to receive into it all who loved his Lord. The salutations with which most of his Epistles close, and the affectionate remembrances which they convey, include perhaps the names of a greater number of friends, than any dozen of Greek or Roman heroes, in the plenitude of success and power, ever attracted; if we may judge in the one case by the same rule as in the other, the narrative of history, or the writings of biographical memoirs.

But his benevolence was not confined to the narrow bounds of friends or country.—*He was a man*, and nothing that involved the best interests of man was indifferent to him. A most beautiful comparison has been drawn by as fine a genius as has adorned this or any age, between the learned and not illaudable curiosity which has led so many ingenious travellers to visit distant and dangerous climes, in order 'to contemplate mutilated statues and defaced coins; to collate manuscripts, and take the height of pyramids,' with the zeal which carried the late martyr of humanity on a more noble pilgrimage, 'to search out infected hospitals, to explore the depth of dungeons, and to take the guage of human misery' in order to relieve it.

Without the unworthy desire to rob this eminent philanthropist of his well earned palm, may we not be allowed to wish, that the exquisite eulogist of Howard had also instituted a comparisen which would have opened so vast a field to his eloquent pen, between the adventurous expeditions of the conqueror, the circumnavigator, the discoveror, the naturalist, with those of Paul, the martyr of the gospel? Paul, who, renouncing ease and security, sacrificing fame and glory, encountering 'weariness and painfulness, watching, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness; was beaten with rods, frequent in prisons, in deaths oft, was once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, was a day and a night in the deep,'* went from shore to shore, and from city to city, knowing that bonds and imprisonment awaited him; and for what purpose? He, too, was a discoverer, and in one sense a naturalist. He explored not indeed the treasures of the mineral, nor the varieties of the vegetable world. His business was with man; his object the discovery of man's moral wants; his study, to apply a proportionate remedy; his work, to break up the barren ground of the human soil; his aim, to promote the culture of the undisciplined heart; his end, the salvation of those for whom Christ died. He did not bring away one poor native to graft the vices of a polished country on the savage ignorance of his own; but he carried to the natives themselves the news, and the means of eternal life.

He was also a conqueror, but he visited new regions, not to depepulate, but to enlighten them. He sought triumphs, but they were over sin and ignorance. He achieved conquests; but it was over the prince of darkness. He gained trophies, but they were not military banners, but rescued souls. He erected monuments, but they were to the glory of God. He did not carve his own name on the rocky shore, but he engraved that of his Lord on the hearts of the people. While conflicting with want, and struggling with misery, he planted churches; while sinking under reproach and obloquy, he erected the standard of the Cross among barbarians, and (far more hopeless enterprize!) among philosophers; and having escaped with life from the most uncivilized nations, was reserved for martyrdom in the imperial queen of cities!

CHAP. XII.

Saint Paul's Heavenly Mindedness.

TRUE religion consists in the subjugation of the body to the soul, and of the soul to God. The apostle every where shows, that by our apostacy this order is destroyed, or rather inverted. At the same time he teaches, that though brought into this degraded state by our own perverseness, we are not hopelessly abandoned to it. He not only shows the possibility, but the mode of our restoration, and describes the happy condition of the restored, even in this world, by declaring, that *to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

He knew that our faculties are neither good nor evil in themselves, but powerful instruments for the promotion of both; active capacities for either, just as the bent of our character

* Timothy. † Epaphroditus.

‡ It is however a debt of justice due to a departed friend to observe, that no suspicion could be more unfounded than that Mr. Soame Jenyns was not sincere in his professsion of Christianity. The author lived much in his very pleasant society, and is persuaded that he died a sincere Christian. He had a peculiar turn of humour; he delighted in novelty and paradox, and perhaps brought too much of both into his religion. Ingenious men will sometimes be ingenious in the wrong place. If he lays too much stress on some things, and underrates others; if he mistakes or overlooks even fundamental points, so that some of his opinions must appear defective to the experienced Christian; yet the general turn of his work on the Internal Evidence of Christianity may render it useful to others, by inviting them by the very novelty of his manner to consult a species of evidence to which they have not been accustomed. A sceptical friend of the writer of these pages, who had stood out against the argument of some of the ablest divines, was led by this little work to examine more deeply into Internal Evidence; it sent him to read his Bible in a new spirit. He followed up his inquiries, consulted authors whose views were more matured, and died a sound believer.

* 2 Corinthians, ch. xi.

is determined by the predominance of religion or of sin, of the sensual or the spiritual mind. Saint Paul eminently exhibited, both in his example and in his writings, the spiritual mind. He was not only equal in correctness of sentiment and purity of practice with those who are drily orthodox, and superior to those who are coldly practical; but he 'perfects holiness in the fear of God.' He abounds in the heavenly mindedness which is the uniting link between doctrinal and practical piety, which, by the unction it infuses into both, proves that both are the result of Divine grace; and which consists in an entire consecration of the affections, a voluntary surrender of the whole man to God.

This disposition the apostle makes the preliminary to all performance, as well as the condition of all acceptance. This it is which constitutes the charm of his writings. There is a spirit of sanctity which pervades them, and which, whilst it affords the best evidence of the love of God shed abroad in his own heart, infuses it also into the heart of his readers. While he is musing, the fire burns, and communicates its pure flame to every breast susceptible of genuine Christian feeling. Under its influence his arguments become persuasions, his exhortations entreaties. A sentiment so tender, and earnestness so imploring, breathes throughout them, that it might seem that all regard for himself, all care for his own interests, is swallowed up in his ardent and affectionate concern for the spiritual interest of others.

The exuberance of his love and gratitude, the fruits of his abundant faith, break out almost in spite of himself. His zeal reproves our timidity, his energy our indifference. 'He dwells,' as an eloquent writer has remarked, 'with almost untimely descant,' on the name of Him who had called him out of darkness into his marvellous light. That name which we are so reluctant to pronounce, not through reverence to its possessor, but fear of each other, ever sounds with holy boldness from the lips of Paul. His bursts of sacred joy, his triumphant appeals to the truth of the promises, his unbounded confidence in the hope set before him, carry an air not only of patience, but of victory, not only of faith, but of fruition.

Whoever desires more particularly to compare this spirit of Divine power manifested by the apostle, with the opposite spirit of the world, let him carefully peruse the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. After describing the strong and painful conflict with the malignant power of sin in the seventh chapter, with what a holy exultation does he, in the opening of the eighth, hurry in, as it were, the assurance that 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' It somewhat resembles that instant, I had almost said, that impatient, mercy of God in the third of Genesis, which seems eager to make the promise follow close upon the fall, the forgiveness upon the sin; to cut off the distressing space between terror and joy, to leave no interval for despair. God, who is so patient when he is to punish, is not so patient when he is to save. He delays to strike, but he hastes to pardon. 'After the first offence,' says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'God could not stay from redeeming;' nor could Paul stay from proclaiming that we *are* redeemed. The apostle, like his Creator, loses not a moment to comfort the soul which he has been afflicting.

In this divine effusion we at once discern the difference between natural weakness and superadded strength; between the infirmities which are fortified by the assistance of the Spirit, and the sensual mind, which not only is not, but cannot be subject to the law of God; between him who not having 'the Spirit of Christ, is none of his,' and him in whom 'Christ, the spirit of life, dwells;' between him, who, if he yield to the pleasures of sense, shall die, and him who, through the Spirit mortifying the deeds of the body shall live.

It is worth observing, that he does not make the line of demarcation between the two classes of characters, to consist merely in the actual crimes and grosser vices of the one class, and the better actions of the other. It is to the sensual and spiritual *mind*, the fountain of good and evil deeds, to which he refers as the decisive test. This radical distinction he further conceives to be a more obvious line of separation than even any difference of religious opinions, any distinction arising from the mere adoption of peculiar dogmas.

That the reviving assurance may appear to belong exclusively to real Christians, he marks the change of character by the definite tense *now*, implying their recent victory over their old corruptions, which he had been deploring. This precaution would prevent those, who remained in their former state from taking to themselves the comfort of a promise in which they have no part. He guards it still more explicitly, by declaring, that the true evidence of this renovation of heart, was their *walking* after the Spirit; a term which describes habitual progress in the new way, to which we are conducted by the new nature, and which, if it do not always preserve us from deviating from it, recalls us back to it.

The power Paul felt; and on this principle he wrote; and he never wrote on any principle on which he did not act. After he had carried piety to the most heroic elevation; after he had pressed the most fervent exertions on others, and gained the splendid conquests over himself, still he considered himself only in the *road* to salvation; still he never thought of slackening his course; he thought not of resting; he had not reached his end. He was not intimidated from pursuing it by new difficulties; his resolution rose with his trials; all he feared for himself, all against which he cautioned others, was declension; his grand solicitude for them and for himself was, that they might not lose the ground they had gained. He well knew, that even the present position could not be long maintained without the pursuit of farther conquests. He *walked* after the Spirit.

The terrible forms of distress which he summons to view in this, as well as in other parts of his Epistles, always remind him of the principle which makes them supportable. He enumerates human miseries in all their variety of shapes,—*tribulation*, *distress*, *persecution*, *famine*, *nakedness*, *peril*, *sword*. But to what end

does he muster this confederate band of woes? He calls on them not to avert the sufferings they inflict; no, he challenges them to separate the Christian sufferer *from the love of Christ.* He presents himself to us as an instance of the supreme triumph of this love over all earthly calamity. The man whose *distresses abounded*, who was *pressed above measure*, comes out of the conflict, not only a conqueror,—that to one of his ardent spirit seemed too poor a triumph, *he is more than a conqueror.* But how is this victory achieved? *Through him who loved us.* That lowliness which made him say just before, 'that which I do I allow not, but what I hate that I do,' must have been lifted by a mighty faith when he exclaimed, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

In speaking, in this chapter, of the glories of the eternal world, his rapture does not escape him as the sally of the imagination, as a thought awakened by a sudden glance of the object; he does not express himself at random from the impulse of the moment; his is not the conjectural language of ignorant desire, of uncertain hope; it is an assumption of the sober tone of calculation. 'I reckon,' says he, like a man skilled in this spiritual arithmetic,—'I reckon,' after a due estimate of their comparative value, 'that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.'

No man was ever so well qualified to make this estimate. Of the sufferings of the present world he had shared more largely than any man. Of the glory that shall be revealed, he had a glimpse granted to no other man. He had been caught up into Paradise. He 'had heard the words of God, and seen the visions of the Almighty,' and the result of his privileged experience, was, that he 'desired to depart, and to be with Christ;' that he desired to escape from this valley of tears; that he was impatient to recover the celestial vision, eager to perpetuate the momentary foretaste of the glories of immortality.

We perceive, then, how this hope of future felicity sustained him under conflicts, of which we, in an established state of Christianity, and suffering only under the common trials of mortality can have no adequate conception. His courageous faith was kept alive and fortified by fervently practising the duty he so unwearyingly urges upon others; *continuing instant in prayer.*

To encourage this practice in his readers, and at the same time to point out the source of his own heavenly hope, and continual intercourse with the Divine presence, he adds, 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.' Nor does his high trust and confidence in God, thus gendered, easily find its limit. On the contrary, he adds, 'we know that *all* things work together for good to them that love God.'

This trust was an assurance of the largest import, and it involved indefinite consequences. Having cordially confided in him for salvation through the blood of Christ, he found, as is always the case, the greater involving the less: he found that he had little difficulty in trusting Him with his inferior concerns. To Him to whom he had committed his eternal happiness, to Him he could not scruple to confide his fortune, his health, his reputation, his life.

We have not, it is true, these manifestations, of which the apostle was favoured with a temporary enjoyment. But we have *his* testimony, added to the testimony, the evidences, the proofs, the promises, the demonstrations of the whole New Testament. Why, then, are we not supported, encouraged, animated by them? It is because we do not examine these evidences, because we do not consult these testimonies, because we neglect these proofs: therefore it is, that we are not nurtured by these promises. We entertain them as speculations, rather than as convictions, we receive them as notions, rather than as facts.

If ever a cordial desire of these devout assurances is conferred, it is in fervent prayer. What an encouragement to this holy exercise, is the hope of being raised by it, to the heart-felt belief that such felicity is real, and that it is reserved for the final portion of the humble Christian? Too humble, perhaps, to give full credit that such great things can be in store for him. For a moment he is staggered, till faith, the parent of that humility which trembles while it believes, enables him to apply to himself the promises of Him to whom nothing is impossible, the merits of Him for whom nothing is too great, the death of Him who died that we might live forever.

In whatever part of his writings the Apostle speaks of the efficacy of the death of Christ, and of the 'constraining' power of his love, there is a vehemence in his desire, a vivacity in his sentiments, an energy in his language, an intensity in his feelings, which strongly indicate a mind penetrated with the depth of his own views. He paints the love of his Lord as a grace, of which, though his soul was deeply sensible as to its nature, yet as to the degree, it is 'exceeding abundantly above' not only 'all that he could ask,' but 'all that he could think.' His boldest conceptions sink under the impression which no language could convey.

Yet these sublime portions of his writings, which bear the more special stamp and impress of the gospel, which afford the nearest view of realities as yet unapproachable, are set aside by many, as things in which they have no personal concern. They have, indeed, a sort of blind reverence for them, as for something which they conceive to be at once sacred and unintelligible, such a kind of respect as a man would naturally entertain at the sight of a copy of the Scriptures in a language which he did not understand.

Eloquent as he was, we often find him labouring under his intense conception of ideas too vast for utterance. In describing the extent of the love of God, its height and depth, its length and breadth, his soul seems to expand with the dimensions he is unfolding. His expressions seem to acquire all that force with which he in-

timates that the soul itself, so acted upon, is invested. *To be strengthened with might*, would have been reckoned tautology in an ordinary writer on an ordinary subject; and to be strengthened with *all* might, would seem an attribute impossible to mortality. But holy Paul had himself felt the excellency of that power; he knew that it is derived, and that the fountain of duration is *the glorious power of God*.

In delineating the mighty operations of Divine love on the human mind, the seeming hyperboles are soberly true. Where the theme is illimitable, language will burst its bounds. He preaches *riches which are unsearchable*—exhorts to know *the love which surpasses knowledge*—promises *peace which passes understanding*—we must *look at things which are not seen*—*against hope we must believe in hope*—while *sorrowful we must always be rejoicing*—*as having nothing we must reckon that we possess all things*—*dying, and behold we live*—*though unknown we are well known*—In short, he reconciles contradictions, unites opposites. Antipathies by nature become affinities by grace. The love of God in Christ is the point where he makes contraries centre, and impossibilities meet.

His spirit seems most intimately to identify itself with the church of Ephesus. What an improbable union! The late idolatrous worshippers of Diana, and the late persecutors of the saints of Jesus, have now but one heart and one soul! These recent enemies to Christ, and to each other, now meet in one common point of attraction. With what holy triumph does he dilate on their common faith! that love of God in Christ Jesus which is their common centre and bond of union!

Still, as we have such frequent occasion to observe, he does not sacrifice practical duty to the indulgence of his rapture. Still he does not allow even these Ephesians to rest satisfied with the grace they have received. It is not enough that they have been favoured with a vocation, they must 'walk worthy of it.' 'The perfecting of the saints' must be carried on; 'they must reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' No such perfection had been attained as would allow them to rest in their present position. Even in this highly favoured church, *progress* is enjoined, pressed, reiterated.—No elevation of devout feeling sets him above attention to moral goodness.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the abrupt apostrophes of praise and gratitude into which, in the midst of sorrow, of exhortation, of reproof, he unexpectedly breaks out. The love of his Redeemer so fills his soul, that it requires an effort to restrain its outward expression. Even when engaged in the transaction of business, and directing the concerns of others, which, by an ordinary mind, would have been pleaded as a valid reason for suspending spiritual ideas, and dismissing spiritual feelings, they yet mix themselves, as it were involuntarily, with his secular cares; there is not only a satisfaction but a joyfulness in these escapes of affection which seem to spring from his soul, in proportion to the depression of his circumstances, to the danger which surrounded, to the deaths which threatened him.

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, it is recorded that they prayed at midnight. This would naturally be expected from such men, under such circumstances; but it is added, 'they sang *praises* unto God.' Thus they not only justified, but glorified Him, under this suffering, as well as degradation. For it must not be forgotten, that this imprisonment was not merely a measure for securing their persons,—they were stripped bare—many stripes were laid upon them, and the iron entered into their soul. Yet they sang praises unto God.

What a triumph is here of the element of spirit over the force and violence of outward circumstances!

'Th' oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range,
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.'

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, to which we have just referred, we are presented with a fresh instance how much his devotion rose under the same circumstances of distress.—It was written from a prison, and is almost one entire effusion of love and praise. It is an overflowing expression of affectionate gratitude, that has no parallel. It seems to be enriched with an additional infusion of the Spirit of God, and has perhaps more of the heroism of Christian feeling than, except in the discourses of our Lord, is to be found in the whole sacred treasury. It seems to come fresh from the celestial world. He speaks not as from a prison, but as from a region of light, and life, and glory. His thoughts are in heaven, his soul is with his Saviour, his heart is with his treasure: no wonder, then, that his language has a tincture of the idiom of immortality.

As Archimedes, when Syracuse was taken by the besiegers, was so intent on a mathematical demonstration, that he knew not when the city was lost: so the apostle, absorbed in a concern as much superior to that of the philosopher as Scripture truth is to scientific, lost sight of the cruelties of Nero, forgot his former sufferings, felt not his present captivity, thought not of his impending fate—present, past, and future, as they related to himself, were absorbed in his zeal for the salvation of the church, for the glory of its founder! Mark the divine supports vouchsafed to this imprisoned Saint! Note his state of grace! Observe the perfection of his faith! How the motion of his spirit was accelerated as it drew nearer to its centre! He whose deep humility had suggested to him the possibility, that, after converting others, he might himself be rejected: he who had desired not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon—now declares that he is *ready* to be offered up, now *desires* to depart; not in the gentle decay of exhausted nature, not in the weaning languor of a sick bed, not in the calm of a peaceful dissolution, suffering only the pains inseparable from an ordinary death; but he is prepared to meet the hand of violence: he is ready to pour out his blood upon the scaffold; he is longing to join 'the souls which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.' So far from being dismayed, because he knew that his mar-

tyrdom was at hand; he who knew not what it was to boast, yet knowing in whom he had trusted; feeling his eternal redemption drawing nigh, could exclaim with a holy bravery; 'I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.'

Then in a rapture of triumphant joy at the mental view of the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, 'had prepared for him against the great day,' that same unparalleled philanthropy, which he had so constantly manifested, breaks out and consecrates a moment, when we might have supposed the immediate nearness of his own unspeakable blessedness would have engrossed his whole soul. His religion was no selfish piety, his hope no solitary salvation. Gratitude swells into its highest transport from the reflection that the Lord Jesus had not exclusively reserved the crown for him, no, nor for the beloved Timothy, to whom he writes, nor for the multitudes of his own friends, nor for the converts who were to be peculiarly 'his joy and crown of rejoicing;' but 'for ALL them also which love his appearing,' for all 'the redeemed of the Lord' to the end of the world.

CHAP. XIII.

A general view of the qualities of Saint Paul: his knowledge of human nature—his delicacy in giving advice or reproof—his integrity.

THERE is in Saint Paul's writings and conduct, such warmth and openness; so much frankness and candour; such an unreserved pouring out of his very soul; such a free disclosure of his feelings, as well as of his opinions; such an elevation, mingled with such a soberness of thinking; so much social kindness, with so much Divine love; so much practical activity, with such deep spirituality; so much human prudence, with so much of the wisdom which is from above; so much tenderness for the persons of men, with so little connivance at their faults; so much professional dignity, with so much personal humility,—as it would be difficult to find in any other human being.

Yet in all these opposite excellences, there is nothing that is not practicable, nothing that is not imitable. His religion, like his morality, has a peculiar sedateness. His ardent feelings betray him into no intemperance of speech, into no inequality of action. His piety is free from eccentricity, his faith from presumption.

Uniformly we find a great reasonableness in his character; and it adds to his value as an example, that he was, if we may be allowed so familiar an expression, eminently a man of business. His transactions, indeed always tended to the same end with his devotions and his instructions; he was full of care, but it was the care of all the churches; each day was fully occupied, but it was that same 'care' which came upon him, not only as a Sunday, but as a daily care.'

The perfection in which he possessed this quality, proves that his devotedness had in it nothing of abstraction. He exhibited no contempt of the common usages, no renunciation of the common comforts of life, when the former could with propriety be observed, or the latter be lawfully enjoyed; no coveting of sufferings, when they could be conscientiously avoided. He was no pattern for ascetics, no prototype for Stylites. He bequeathed no example of bodily macerations, nor uncommanded austerities, nor penances unprofitably aiming at atonement. His idea of self-denial was to sacrifice his own will; his notion of pleasing God was to do and suffer the Divine will.

His discretion was scarcely less conspicuous than his zeal: unlike some enthusiastic Christians in the early ages of the Church, who, not contented to meet persecution, invited it; he never sought, whilst he never shrunk from danger. Though his life was one continued martyrdom, to which the brief suffering of the stake or the axe would have been a mercy, yet he was contented to live for lengthened services; though he would have finished his course with joy to himself, he was willing to protract it for the glory of God; though *he counted not his life dear*, yet he knew it to be useful, and therefore desired its continuance.

He was entirely exempt from that indiscreet zeal which seems to glory in provoking the displeasure of the world. He had nothing of that bad judgment, which seeks distinction from singularity. His straight-forward rectitude neither courted the applause, nor despised the good opinion of men. He who, in the integrity of his heart could say, 'We sought glory neither of you nor yet of others; in the tenderness of that heart could say, to the same persons, 'for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing; are not even ye,—ye are our glory and joy."

He was totally free from any irrational confidence in supernatural interpositions. Though living under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he felt no enthusiastic inflation.

Though, in his perilous* voyage, assured by an angel of God that there should be no loss of lives, yet he helped *with his own hands* to throw out the tackling, and the ship *must* be worked by his direction. He went farther, declaring, 'except the men abide in the ship ye *cannot* be saved.' Could the boldest impugner of Divine Providence have exercised more prudence, have exhibited more activity?

Not only from this passage, but from the general spirit of his writings, we may learn, that merely to say, we trust in God for the accomplishment of any thing within our power, without using ourselves the rational means of accomplishing it, is a total want of sense; and not entirely to trust in Him, while we are using them, is an utter want of faith.

Though favoured with immediate revelations from above, yet was Paul so singularly modest, as only slightly to advert to Divine communications, and then in the name of a third person,—*I knew a man in Christ.*—So continent of speech, as not even to disclose this distinction till near fourteen years after it had been conferred. May we not then agree with the sagacious Paley, that 'Saint Paul's mind had none of the characteristics of enthusiasm; that the coolness of his

* Acts, ch. xxvii.

head always kept pace with the warmth of his heart?'

His conduct uniformly exhibits the precise distinction between Christian wisdom and worldly policy. His boundary-line is clearly defined, and he never steps over it to serve a purpose. Of that prudence which is a-kin to selfishness, of that discretion which leans to craft, of that candour which tends to undue pliancy, of that wisdom which is sensual and earthly, he had not the slightest tincture. What an illustrious orator of our own time said of his contemporary statesman, may be far more appropriately applied to Saint Paul,—that, in gaining admiration, *his virtues were his arts.**

His intellectual powers were admirably constituted to second his high moral and spiritual attainments. He had an intuitive sagacity of mind. This deep master of the science of man was intimately acquainted with all the doublings and turnings, the intricacies and perverseness of the heart. In short he knew the exact point from which to take the most comprehensive view of this *scene of man;* and his writings possess this great advantage, that they also put the intelligent reader in the position to take the same view. He knew every plait and fold of the human character. He had studied the species in all its modifications and varieties, from the monarch on the throne to the meanest officer in his court; from the high priest presiding in the Sanhedrim to the pharisee praying in the street: of the intolerance of the one, he had had personal experience; through the duplicity of the other, his keen eye could picree, without consulting the breadth of his phylactery.

The same acute penetration brought him no less acquainted with the errors of the well-intentioned, with the weaknesses of the wise, with the failings of the virtuous, and the inconsistencies of even the conscientious. Yet did he never convert his knowledge of all the shades of the human mind to an unkind, malevolent, or selfish purpose. It never taught him to hate the unworthy, with whose obliquities it made him acquainted; or to despise the weak whose infirmities it had discovered. So far was he from availing himself of his sagacity, by turning the vices or imbecilities of others to his own account, that it inspired him with a more tender and compassionate feeling for the frailties of their common nature.

In perusing his Epistles, we should always bear in mind, that Saint Paul is not addressing the profligate and profane, but converts, or, at least, religious professors. This consideration would prevent our putting the reproofs and corrections which he thought necessary for them at too great a distance from ourselves. Into this danger we may be too much inclined to fall, if we do not bring these people nearer to what we suppose to be our own level. They were already Christians. It was not, therefore, always necessary to arrange all the fundamental doctrines into a regular system, much less to begin with a formal exposition of the elements of a religion, with the principles of which they were already imbued; or at least with the doctrines of which they were acquainted. This manner of addressing them is a proof that their progress was already considerable.

The first Epistle is inscribed 'to all that are at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, whose faith is spoken of throughout the world.' The next is 'to the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia.' Another 'to the saints that are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.' Again, 'to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse.' His letters to individual friends, designate also the piety of his correspondents. 'To Timothy, his son in the faith;' 'to Titus, his own son after the common faith.' And in writing to the Hebrews collectively, he denominates them 'holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.'

It would be well if the generality of Christians could aspire to rank with any of these classes. Saint Paul's knowledge of mankind, however, of which we have said so much, would prevent his addressing the best of his converts, as characters who did not require either caution, correction, or improvement. He knew even after they had adopted the Christian profession, how pertinaciously bad habits would cleave to some, how much besetting sins, natural infirmity, temptation without, and passion within, would impede the progress of others. He was aware that many who thought themselves sincere, and perhaps really were so, were yet careless and cold hearted; that many who were warm in profession, were selfish, indolent, covetuous; that many who appeared to be lovers of God, were yet inordinately lovers of pleasure; that some who professed to be dead to sin, were alive to the world. 'Alexander did him much evil,' 'Demas forsook him;' 'Phygellus and Hermogenes turned away from him.'

The persons to whom he wrote might, on the whole, be considered as no unfair specimen of professing Christians in every age. Consequently neither his doctrine nor his precepts can, by any fair rule of judgment, be limited to the community, or even to the individual, to whom they were immediately inscribed; he has erected his mandate into an unalterable standard of general Christianity.

The inspiring guide of Saint Paul knew that human nature, left to its own specific operation, would be the same in that church of Rome to which his Epistle was addressed, as in the now existing church of that metropolis,—a church which has so far departed from the simplicity of its founder; that the church of Ephesus would differ only in its local circumstances and form of government from the church of England; that the same sort of beings, with the same wants and weaknesses which composed the church of Galatia, would compose that of Geneva and of Holland; that it was not the Corinthian convert alone who should become 'a new creature;' that it was not the member of any *particular* community that must 'put off the old man with his deeds;' he knew that the transmuting power of true religion would confer the same character of newness upon every genuine believer; that as in every age the principle is the same, so also will be the results.

In illustration of these general remarks, let

* Mr Burke of the Marquis of Rockingham.

us select a particular case.—Our apostle had not studied the human heart to so little purpose as not to perceive that it is of itself commonly indisposed to liberality. Even where a measure of religious feeling has conferred or enlarged this virtue, he knew that it requires excitement to keep the flame alive; that if easily kindled by some affecting tale, or some present object, it may, by being left to itself, be as easily extinguished. He knew that impressions, if not immediately followed up, and acted upon, soon wear out; that a warm impulse, if left to cool, evaporates in mere profession. On this principle, then, we find him delicately reminding the Corinthians* of the zeal with which they had voluntarily engaged to raise a fund for the indigent, and remonstrating on the obligation to put their own plan in execution, by distributing as well as collecting.

In suggesting this duty, he takes a circuitous path, by intimating the necessity of consistency in the conduct of Christians, by dwelling on the expediency of those who abounded in faith and eloquence, and religious knowledge, abounding also in acts of beneficence; and by hinting that a high profession, without that broad principle of Christian charity, of which he knew almsgiving to be one fruit, would be an anomaly discreditable to themselves, and injurious to religion.

He then proposes to them, with the hand of a master, persuasions, arguments, and examples; he makes duties grow out of motives, and impresses both by actual instances. He mentions, in a sort of incidental way, the benevolence of a less opulent and less instructed people, the Macedonians; and, according to his invariable custom, produces their charity as growing out of their piety. *They gave themselves first unto the Lord*, and then, as the effect would naturally follow the cause, *they gave unto us by the will of God.* He informs them, that this generous people did not wait to confer their bounty till it was solicited. He intimates, that in this instance it was not those who wanted the charity, but those who gave it, 'that pressed it, with much entreaty;' instructively hinting, that they had made true use of afflictions; for that 'their poverty,' instead of being pleaded as an apology for withholding their charity, 'abounded to the riches of their liberality.'

This was a powerful intimation, that if those more indigent converts had been so bountiful, what might not be expected from the opulent metropolis of the regions of Achaia? It was also an experiment of their sincerity; for if they were more forward in profession, and more abundant in graces, would it not be an expected consequence, that they should be more abundant in works of charity?

And, finally not contented with pressing upon them the example of a church of inferior note, he rises suddenly to the sublimest of all precedents. He does not, to *them*, quote any injunction of their Divine Master to charity, though with such injunctions the Gospel abounds; but in a manner strong, and instant, unexpectedly presses his *example*, and in the loftiest possible instance:* 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. To what a trifle, to what a nothing does he, by this admirable turn, reduce the largest pecuniary bounty, by directing their attention to the UNSPEAKABLE GIFT!

To the same purpose he directs his friends at Ephesus, in his last affectionate discourse, to the *precept* of Christ. After the most powerful exhortations, he alludes to his having himself supplied his necessities by the labour of his own hands, in order to the exercise of charity; and then, lest they should suppose this to be any vaunt of his self-denial, rather than a declaration made to stimulate his hearers to similar industry, by a similar motive of charity,—he sums up the charge by a most powerful incitement, equal of itself to account for his own generosity, as well as to awaken theirs, producing the only posthumous quotation which Scripture has preserved of the Divine Instructor: 'Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Another instance of his delicacy is that in addressing the same people, when he would lower to its just inferiority the value of gifts and miraculous powers, in comparison of *the more excellent way*, he does not directly point at their vanity and self-exultation, but with a refinement worthy the attention of all censors, he transfers the application to himself—Though *I* (not though you) speak with the tongues of men and of angels; though I have the gift of propheey and faith; though *I* bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, *I* am nothing.†

As he thought it necessary, in this address to adduce the strongest supposeable instances, even instances which could not be thought to exist, there was no method which could so effectually expose the radical evil of uncharitableness with so little offence to those who were guilty of it, as to apply the imaginary case to his own person: nor could the most elaborate harangue on the beauty of charity have produced without it so powerful an effect; nor would any delineation of all the opposite vices, which were notoriously practised by the proud and sensual Corinthians, have affected them so much, as this beautiful portrait of the heavenly virtue in which many of them were eminently deficient, and to whom the picture therefore presented such a contrast.

Yet, while he thus combated their preference of those which might raise admiration, to those which tended to the public good, he thought proper to let them see that the inferior value he set on them was not to screen or justify any ignorance of his own; and that, as is too commonly the case, he did not depreciate learning, because he did not possess it.

After having enjoined on the Thessalonians, that it was their duty 'to love one another, as they were taught of God,' lest it might look like a suspicion rather than a reminding, he encouragingly subjoins,—'and indeed ye do it.' In the same spirit, after saying to the same

* 2 Cor. ch. viii.

* 2 Cor. ch. viii. † Cor. ch. xiii

church, 'Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another,' he again intimates that they did not so much require to be instructed as congratulated, by adding, 'even as also ye do.'

Again, with a holy generosity, when he has any thing to notice, which he can honestly praise, the commendation he bestows is undivided; when any unacceptable point to press, he softens prejudices and courts compliance by mixing himself with the injunction, or involving himself in the censure: 'Let *us* cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh or spirit.' In lamenting, in the seventh of Romans, the dominion of sin, he speaks in his own person: in referring, in the subsequent chapter, to the dominion of grace, he extends the consolation to all believers. On every occasion which calls both qualities, gentleness and lowliness, into exercise, Saint Paul shows himself not only to be the humblest, but the politest of men.

Had a late noble and polished preceptor* been as conversant with the Holy Scriptures as he unquestionably was with polite literature, and had his principles been as sound as his taste, he would have had no occasion to look farther than the writings of Paul of Tarsus, for the most complete illustration of that favourite maxim, the adoption of which he so repeatedly enjoined on his misguided pupil. His fine sense, under the influence of religion, would have led him, while he pressed the injunction, to give it all it wanted,—a right direction. He would have found the *suaviter in modo* accompany the *fortiter in re*, more uniformly in our apostle than in any other writer.

In addition to the numberless instances of this union, that occur in his Epistles, some of which we have already noticed, we cannot forbear mentioning, that in writing to Timothy, he recommends 'the spirit of power and of a *sound mind*;' to which he subjoins, '*hold fast the form of sound words*.' But while he is so peremptory as to the force of the matter, he is not less attentive to the duty of mildness in the manner. He directs, that the dictates of this sound mind be conveyed with *affection*,—this form of sound words be communicated with *love*; and in expatiating on these gentle graces, we must not forget the situation under which he exercised them.

In the days of prosperous fortune, we frequently see the appearance of cheerfulness and complacency in characters not remarkable for gentleness of mind: but Paul, under the most disastrous circumstances, never fails to exhibit the same amiable courtesies. It is therefore not easy to account for the prejudices of certain persons, who always speak of him, as a character of the most repulsive harshness.

I should be very unwilling to suspect, if a few of these critics are to be found among my own sex, that their dislike to this apostle arises from a cause which is rather calculated to inspire gratitude than to provoke censure. His attention, in not being limited to their highest interests, but descending also to their minutest concerns is a proof surely that he thought nothing beneath his notice, which might raise the dignity and add to the beauty of the female character. I should be very unwilling to suppose that their disapprobation arises from his having said, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Nor could I presume to suspect, that his injunction of submission to their husbands, —of subordination *always*, and of silence *sometimes*,—can possibly be the cause of the hostility of any Christian ladies.

Still less would I venture to suppose, that their displeasure is owing to his having recommended 'that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel,'—nor that they should object to him for his preference of 'shamefacedness' to 'costly array,'—of 'sobriety' to 'broidered hair,'—of 'good works' to 'gold and pearls.'*

It looks as if Saint Paul was of opinion, that the external appearance of women was an indication of the disposition of the mind; and this opinion it is probable made him so earnest in recommending these symbols of internal purity. He doubtless more strongly prohibits certain personal decorations, because they were the insignia of the notoriously unworthy females of his time. And it may be fairly presumed, that he never thought it could be construed into a hardship to be cautioned against wearing the badge of the profession of Lais.

If they are of opinion, that his pointedly suggesting to them the ornaments of *a meek and quiet spirit*, was at least a *superfluous* injunction, they will forgive him on the ground that he might not think it unnecessary, even to the most gentle, to 'stir up their pure mind by way of *remembrance*.'

It is obvious that he could not possibly entertain any prejudices against a sex, in which he counted so many valuable friends. And let it be seriously observed, that in whatever relates to pious affections, to Christian practice, to disinterested kindness, to zeal and diligence, there was obviously, in Saint Paul's estimation, neither male nor female. For we do not hear more of his affectionate regard for good women, and of his generous testimony to their worth, than we hear of the friendship with the sex of any other character in history? He delights in their praises. 'Phebe' is warmly commended for her good offices 'to the Saints at Rome,' not only as having been an important assistant to the apostle himself, but as 'the succourer of many' Christians. 'Priscilla' is honourably recorded as 'his helper in Christ Jesus,' as one who with her husband, had, 'for his life laid down their necks.' For this he thankfully observes, they are entitled not only to his thanks, but also to 'the thanks of all the churches of the Gentiles.' He acknowledges that 'Mary had bestowed much labour on him and his converts.' The name of 'Apphia,' and that of 'Julia,' is perpetuated by his affectionate gratitude. That of 'Chloe' stands prominent in his grateful page. 'Tryphena and Tryphosa laboured much in the Lord.' To the honour of British ladies be it remembered, that his friend 'Claudia' was our countrywoman.†

* Lord Chesterfield.

* 1 Tim. ch. ii.

† If any consideration should increase the interest we

Paul observes that, in the family of Timothy, piety on the female side was hereditary, and he congratulates his friend on the excellent principles of his two maternal relations; and virtually ascribes to these instructresses, 'that from a child he was acquainted with the Scriptures.' Others he has named, whose praise is not only in the churches, but whose names are in the book of life.

Are not these testimonies to female excellence from such an eulogist, and in such a cause,

'Above all Greek, above all Roman fame?'

If it stands recorded on the monument of a noble Englishman, as his highest distinction, that he was *friend to Sir Philip Sidney*, it stands engraven on a monument more durable than brass, even in the indestructible records of the Book of God, that so many women were the honoured friends of the chiefest apostle of Jesus Christ.

If Saint Paul has been further accused by some persons of being an enemy to the state of marriage, it must be by those who forget to take into the account what a calamitous time, that in which he wrote was for Christians, · who forget also his own express declaration, that the suggested suspension of such an union was 'good for the *present distress*.' His compassionate mind foresaw the aggravated calamities to which the entrance into this tender connection would, at this particular juncture, involve the persecuted Christians. Is it not absurd to suppose that this zealous apostle of Christ would suggest, as a permanent practice, a measure which must in a few years, if persisted in, inevitably occasion the entire extinction of Christianity itself?

Since, then, it would be derogatory to any, especially of my own sex, to suspect that their objection to Saint Paul can arise from any of these causes, may we not more rationally conjecture, that it proceeds from a prejudice lightly taken up on hearsay evidence—a prejudice propagated without serious inquiry, without having themselves closely examined his writings? Such an examination, to which they are now earnestly invited, would convince them that, to all his exalted qualities, he added, in an eminent degree, urbanity, feeling, and liberality.

But nothing more raises our veneration for Saint Paul's character, than that his extreme sensibility of heart, and his rare delicacy in consulting the feelings of others, to which we have so frequently referred, is never exercised at the expense of his integrity. There are, as we have before observed, many upright minds, whose honesty is yet somewhat disfigured by a harsh temper. They are too conscientious to censure unjustly, but, knowing the censure to be merited, they have rather a pleasure in inflicting the correction. And though they are not glad the offender deserves it, they are not sorry it is *their* duty to impart it. Saint Paul never severely reproved another, that he did not inflict a wound on his own feelings. Yet though he would rather have spared another than himself, he would spare neither when the imperative voice of duty demanded plain dealing. Gentleness of manner in our apostle was the fruit of his piety; the good breeding of some men is a substitute for theirs.

The conduct of Saint Peter and Saint Paul presents at once a striking instance of the integrity of Christian friendship, and of the imperfection of human excellence. Before the apostles met at Antioch, Peter seems to have erred in a material point, not in associating freely with the Gentiles, but in disingenuously shunning their society on the return of his Jewish friends. This fear of human censure, which was not yet entirely extinguished in this great apostle, while it strengthened the prejudices of the Jews, weakened the influence of the other apostles; misled Barnabas 'though a good man, and a just; and not a little alarmed Paul.

This vigilant minister thought the example so fraught with dangerous consequences, that he boldly remonstrated on this act of duplicity,—an act unlike the general character of Peter, which, except in *one* awful instance, rather inclined to indiscreet frankness. Paul himself informs us, in his Epistle to the Galatians, that he 'withstood him to his face,' not to gratify any resentment of his own, but because his friend 'was to be blamed;' not privately, to spare his confusion, but 'before them all,' to avert the danger. Nor does this Christian sincerity appear to have interrupted their friendship; for it did not prevent Peter, on a subsequent occasion, from alluding to Paul as his *beloved brother*. From this circumstance we may learn among other things, that the 'fear of man,' is one of the lingering evils which quits the human heart with the greatest reluctance: it shows that it may cleave to him, even in his renovated state, and that therefore the same vigilance is necessary in this, as in his previous character.

Peter, on this occasion, gave an instance of that prompt repentance which he had so repeatedly manifested after the commission of an error He offered no justification of his fault, but observed a meek silence. We learn also, from the recorded failings of Saint Peter, that this *first* bishop of Rome, at least, did not arrogate to himself the claim of infallibility.

Saint Paul's kindness for his brethren never made him on any occasion lose sight of his courageous integrity. Considering the Gentile proselytes to be peculiarly the objects of his care, he resolutely defended them from the necessity of submitting to the law of Moses, thus preserving to the Gentiles their liberty, and to the Gospel its purity. By his firmness in this instance, a great obstacle to the reception of Christianity was removed.

May we here be allowed to observe, though somewhat out of place, that the characters of these two apostles are brought forward with such remarkable prominency and detail, in Sacred History, that it would be a subject well worthy some able pen, to delineate the characters of the men, and interweave that of their writings, in some connected work. Thus placed in one frame, we should have a most interesting view of these two eminent persons as the repre-

take in this blessed apostle, it would be the strong presumption, from testimonies recently adduced by a learned, pious, and labourious prelate, that Saint Paul, in all probability, preached the Gospel in Britain, to which country it is conjectured, after the most diligent research, that he returned with the family of Caractacus.

sentatives of the Gentile and the Jewish Churches of Christ. This representation, incorporated with the circumstances which distinguished the first promulgation of the Gospel, renders every particular concerning them highly affecting.

But to return. It is to be observed, as a fresh proof of the honesty and the spirit of self renunciation which governed our apostle, that when he reprehends the Corinthians for their imprudence in opposing one minister to another;—in the partiality and favouritism which he condemns, he makes no exception for Paul: the preference to himself above Apollos would not gratify a mind, who, beside the danger to the flattered individual, saw the evil of opposition, of rivalry, of division, let who will be the person preferred.

He might have seen the dangerous and blinding influence of excessive prepossession and party attachment; when even his wise and virtuous contemporary, Seneca, could say of Cato, that he would rather esteem drunkenness a virtue than think Cato vicious. Nor would he probably have accepted of the same compliment which Cicero pays to the famous discourse on the Immortality of the Soul,—that though Plato had given no *reason* for it, yet his *authority* would have determined him.

CHAP. XIV.

Saint Paul on the Love of Money.

Among the innumerable difficulties daily incident to the life of man, we may reckon as not among the least, the danger almost inseparable, which attends the yet inevitable necessity for money. To reconcile integrity in the pursuit with innocence in the possession, is indeed to convert a perilous trial into a valuable blessing. Riches are no evil in themselves: the danger lies, in not being able to manage the temptation they hold out to us. Even where the object is fairly pursued, and the acquisition not unfairly appropriated, a close application to the attainment of wealth is not without its snares to the most upright and liberal mind.

Even these better-disposed persons, in spite of purity of intention and integrity of conduct, are in constant danger, while in pursuit of their object, of being entangled in complicated schemes, and overwhelmed with excessive solicitude; of being so overcharged with the cares of this world, as to put that world which is out of sight, out of mind also.

Others find, or fancy, that there is a shorter cut and a surer road to riches, than that in which plodding industry holds on his slow and weary way. Industry is too dull for an enterprising spirit; integrity too scrupulous for the mind which is bent on a quick accomplishment of its object. The rewards of both are too remote, too uncertain, and too penurious, for him 'who maketh haste to be rich.'

Much occurs to this point, in Saint Paul's charge to Timothy, contained in the latter part of the last chapter of his first Epistle. Keeping one main end in view, the apostle has indeed adopted a sort of concealed method, which requires some attention in the reader to discover. The general drift of this powerful exhortation is, less to guard his beloved friend himself, who was perhaps in comparatively small danger from the temptation, than to induce him to warn those over whom he had the spiritual superintendence, against the *love of money*. In order to this, he does not immediately enter upon the main subject, but opens with another proposition, though in no very remote connection with it; a proposition the most important, and the most incontrovertible, namely, the immense gain to that soul which should combine *godliness* with *contentment*. He knew the union to be inseparable; that as godliness cannot subsist without contentment, so neither can true contentment spring from any other than an inward principle of real piety. All contentment, which has not its foundation in religion, is merely constitutional—animal hilarity, the flow of blood and spirits in the more sanguine character; coldness and apathy in the more indifferent.

The pressing, then, this preliminary principle, was beginning at the right end. A spirit of contentment is stifling covetousness in its birth; it is strangling the serpent in the cradle. Strong and striking are the reasons which the apostle produces against discontent. To the indigent he says, 'they brought nothing into the world,' therefore they need the less murmur at possessing little in it. To the wealthy he holds out a still more powerful argument against *the rage canine of dying rich*, when he reminds them that they 'can carry nothing out of it.'

This reflection he intends at once to teach content to the poor, and moderation to the rich. The one should be satisfied with a bare subsistance, for the poorest cannot be poorer than when they came into the world: the other should not enlarge their desires for boundless indulgences, to the means of gratifying which, as well as to the gratification itself, the grave will so soon put a period.

The apostle, having shown his deep insight into the human mind by his brief but just view of the subject, goes on to show the miserable consequences of discontent, or, which is the same thing, of an indefinite desire of wealth. 'They that *will* be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' The words are weighty and powerful, and amply verified by experience, whether we consider money in its acquisition or in its possession. Its votaries 'fall into a snare.'

We have need to be more intently on the watch against the intrusions of this unsuspected sin, because there is not one which intrenches itself within so many creditable pretences; none in which more perverted passages are adduced from Scripture itself in its support. 'If any provide not for those of his own house, he is worse than an infidel,' is frequently translated into a language foreign to its meaning, unfavourable to dispersing abroad. That charity begins at home, is not seldom pleaded as a reason why she should never turn out. There is one plea always ready as an apology for the eagerness for amassing superfluous wealth; and it is a plea which has a good look. *We must*

provide for our children is the pretence, but we must indulge our avarice, is the truth. The fact is, a man is *provident* for his family, but he is covetous for himself. The sordid mind and the grasping hand are too eager to put off their gratification to so remote a period as the future aggrandizement of those for whom they pretend to amass. The covetous man hungers for instant gratification, for the pleasure of counting his hoards, for the pride of 'calling his lands by his own name.'

Even many professing Christians speak with horror of public diversions, or even of human literature, as containing the essence of all sin, yet seem to see no turpitude, to feel no danger, to dread no responsibility, in any thing that respects this private, domestic, bosom sin; this circumspect vice, this discreet and orderly corruption. Yet the sins which make no noise are often the most dangerous, and the vices of which the effect is to procure respect, instead of contempt, constitute the most deadly snare.

Wit has not been more alert in shooting its pointed shafts at avarice, than argument has been busy in its defence. No advocate, it is true, will venture to defend it under its own proper character; but avarice takes the license used by other felons, and, by the adoption of an *alias*, escapes the reprobation attached to its own name. Covetousness has a bad sound; it is, if we may be allowed the application, a moral cacophony, a fault which no critic in ethics can at any rate tolerate. It is a tacit confession of its hateful nature, and its possessor never avows its real name, even to himself. This quality not only disguises its turpitude by concealment, but shrouds its own character under the assumed name of half the virtues. When accused, it can always make out a good case. It calls itself frugality, moderation, temperance, contempt of show, self-denial, sobriety; thus at once cherishing the pleasure and the profit of the sin, and the escaping its infamy.

Even the most careless in conduct, the most negligent of character, he who never defends himself against the charge of what he calls the more generous vices, indignantly fights off the imputation of this. While he deems it a venial offence to deny himself no guilty pleasures, to pay no just debts, he would repel the accusation of being sordid as strongly as a man of principle. Yet at the same time his thirst of money may be as ardent, in order to make a bad use of it, as his who covets it without intending to use it at all.

Let not therefore 'the snares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches' make us forget that he who covets money as a means to other forbidden gratifications, is as much guilty of covetousness as he who desires it as an end. He who makes it the minister to improper indulgences, is not less criminal as an example, and is far more criminal as to the effects of his conduct, than he who covets in order that he may amass. The Word of Inspiration calls covetousness idolatry; but are not inordinate lovers of pleasure, for which money supplies the aliment, idolators also; inasmuch as the sacrifices they offer to their idol prevents their being 'lovers of God?'

If this ensnaring love of money assumes to be connected with the sober qualities, which is commonly the case in quiet minds, it is far otherwise in those of a different order. In most minds it is the enemy of charity. The demands of this great duty are amongst the first and most easy sacrifices at the shrine of Mammon, more especially where a too large scale of expense has been established, and a reduced expenditure is thought necessary: how often do we see the first deduction made, by withholding a little paltry sum which had been assigned to charity; a sum perhaps originally disproportionate to the general habits of expense; while no blow is aimed at the redundances of a devouring luxury, of an inordinate vanity; though the retrenchment in the first instance will scarcely be felt, while, in the latter, it might restore the power, not only of perpetuating, but of augmenting beneficence.

But the mischief is of still wider extent. In more animated minds the love of money is frequently allied to the bolder vices; to rapacity to oppression, to injustice: and as these more formidable sins are usually practised for the purpose of obtaining the means of splendour, magnificence, and show: wealth, even thus obtained, not seldom procures its own protection. The gay and unthinking, whose grand object in life is to multiply the scenes of dissipation, and who enjoy these pleasant effects of their neighbour's vices by participating in the amusements they procure, are not very inquisitive as to the source from whence these prodigal pleasures flow. The unsuccessful aspirer after forbidden wealth is indeed not only avoided but stigmatized; with them his crime lies not so much in the attempt as in the failure; while prosperous corruption easily works itself into favour: having first struggled for oblivion for the cause, it soon obtains praise for the effect, and finds little difficulty in maintaining a station which it required some management to reach.

But if there are few vices which separate a man less from the friendship of the world, than avarice, there are few that separate him more widely from the duty which he owes to his neighbour, or stand more fearfully between his soul and his God; 'it drowns men in destruction and perdition.' When the eye is first opened on the eternal world, how will many among the rich, the powerful, the flattered, be astonished to find all the attributes which made them great, extinct; all the appendages which made them arrogant, vanish; to find—nothing but themselves.

It is to be observed, that Saint Paul not only calls the love of money an evil, for in this view, where the passion is acknowledged, it is commonly considered; but he proceeds further to denominate it the 'root,' the radical principle, not only of one evil, but of *all* evil. Besides that there is scarcely any sin which the determined lovers of money will not be led to commit, in order to gain money, there are also, as we have observed, innumerable evils in its misapplication when gained; those he probably included in their general condemnation. Other vices are loved for their own sake, but riches are idolized for the sake of every indulgence of

which they procure the enjoyment, of every vice to which that enjoyment leads.

This it is which makes riches the general centre of human desire. They who do not accumulate money persuade themselves that they do not love it; but many love it for far other ends than to hoard it. Saint Paul knew that it was the *universal* snare; a trap appropriately baited with every allurement congenial to the taste of the person on whom the temptation is to be practised;—to the elegant desires of the more refined, or the coarser appetite of the more grossly voluptuous. The sensual, the aspiring, the vain, and the prodigal, all consider it as the grand indispensable material with which to build their visionary fabrics of happiness.

Money is the most efficient tool with which ambition works; it is the engine of political mischief, and of domestic oppression; the instrument of individual tyranny, and of universal corruption. Money is the elementary principle of pleasure; it is the magnet which, to the lover of flattery, attracts parasites; which the vain man loves for the circle it describes about him, and the train which it draws after him, even more than for the actual enjoyments which it procures him. It is the grand spring and fountain of pride and self-sufficiency; more especially to those who have nothing better to value themselves upon; to those of inferior education, suddenly raised to wealth or power; to those who are deficient in intellectual as well as spiritual endowments. In short, as the fabled king turned every thing into gold which he touched, so its craving possessor turns gold into every thing he desires. It is the substance and the essence which, under endless modifications, ensnares, betrays, and finally disappoints the heart of man.

After enumerating the various moral dangers to which the love of money lays the heart open, the Apostle adverts to its highest possible corruption; he declares it to be the root of apostacy. He doubtless alluded to his own immediate knowledge of certain persons, who, while they 'coveted after riches, had erred from the faith.' There is something extremely touching in this effect of covetousness, which Saint Paul appears himself to have witnessed among some of whom he had once seemed to hope better things;—*they had pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, with incurable anguish perhaps for that abandonment of God, into which covetousness had seduced them.

It was probably these living instances of the ruin of virtuous principles by this vice, which leads him to warn even Timothy, so great a proficient in piety, of the perils attached to the love of money. And nothing affords matter of more awful reflection to the most sincere Christian, than that Paul thought it necessary to caution his 'dearly beloved Timothy, his own son in the faith,' Timothy, the exemplary Bishop of Ephesus, against the snares of this insidious enemy. Shall a common, shall even a sincere Christian, think vigilance superfluous, when this distinguished saint was not only charged to caution others, but to guard himself against this most treacherous of all temptations?

There is something peculiarly solemn in the apostle's mode of adjuring Timothy to avoid this sin. The single apostrophe, 'O man of God!' would be a panoply against the temptation. The implied impossibility that *a man of God* could be a coveter of money, was equal to a thousand arguments against it.

The two-fold guard with which he arms Timothy is equally applicable to all Christians He does not say, deliberate on your danger, reason on the temptation, produce your strong arguments against it,—but *flee these things.* Flight is in this case the only courage; escape the only security; turning your back upon the enemy, the only sure means of conquering him.

But Saint Paul does not only direct what is to be avoided, but what is to be done. The flight from sin is not a mere negative act, it involves positive duties; in its view it involves, *following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.* All these spiritual and moral graces he draws up in battle array, to assist as auxiliaries in the combat he is about to enjoin. The Christian will have to maintain a conflict with corruption and temptation, during the whole scene of action. Going on to sustain the metaphor drawn from the military warfare, he calls on Timothy *as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ;* and while he exhorts him to *fight the good fight of faith*, he presents to his view the crown of victory. He assures him that it will not be a mere gratuitous fight, *he will lay hold on eternal life.*

He reminds Timothy of his special vocation 'whereunto thou art called.' He animates him with the quickening recollection of the glorious profession he had made; and that, not in the retirement of devotion, but 'before many witnesses,' intimating how much the honour of the Gospel is concerned in the proficiency, the steadfastness, the perseverance to the end, of all its professors, especially of its appointed teachers. He not only reminds him of his profession at his baptism, and consecration to the ministry, but in order to elevate his mind to the highest pitch, he adjures him *in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things*, and could raise him to immortal glory; and, as if he would fill his mind with every grand and awful image, reminds him of the 'good confession made by the Divine Confessor before Pontius Pilate,' exhorting him from all these lofty motives, to 'keep this commandment spotless and unreproachable until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ!' In so doing, men could not rebuke him, religion would not be wounded by him, and his Saviour would finally receive him with the plaudit he has promised, and the crown he had purchased.

The sublime doxology which follows; the ascription to God, of all power, praise, and dominion, glory and immortality, the fervour of his mind, rapt as it seems to be with the present view of the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, Lord of lords, immortal, invisible, unapproachable, and surrounded with visions of glory,—do not make the apostle forget to revert to the main object of his charge, the danger of riches; or rather the anticipation of future bliss had fired his soul with more intense zeal against that sin which he thought most likely to shut out his beloved converts from the enjoyment of

'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches.'

Having thus shown the nature of riches—'uncertain' in every thing but their danger,—he soon despatches the concluding and most pleasant part of his office, by showing how the Christian use of riches may convert a snare into a blessing; an instrument of ruin into an evidence of faith. He proposes a scheme of moral usury, shows that there is a species of avarice which he not only allows, but enjoins, *that they who are rich in this world* increase the interest of their money by laying it out in good works; that *they lay up in store against the day to come;* against a remoter period than that for which the covetous provide. This is beating the miser at his own weapons; this is indeed giving perpetuity to riches; what they lay out for the poor they lay up for themselves, by *lending unto the Lord.* This is a legitimate love of money, this is a covetousness worthy of a Christian. This is indeed lodging their treasure beyond the reach of moth, rust or thieves.

He cautions them against the love of riches from their *uncertainty;* an argument likely to weigh with those who are blind to higher considerations; an argument more illustrated *to us* by actual instances in the late frenzy of revolution, than any other period of history. He then contrasts what is uncertain with what is solid and durable. That confidence which is not to be placed in 'uncertain riches,' he directs to be transfered to 'the living God,' the foundation of all substantial opulence, the giver of all the good that is enjoyed; the giver of all 'the power to get wealth,' and of the heart to use it to his glory. This readiness 'to distribute,' this willingness 'to communicate,' these unequivocal fruits of faith, obedience, and love, not the purchase of heaven but the evidences of faith in him who died to purchase it for them, will not be rejected by real Christians, after his declaration, 'inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

When we consider the contradiction which the lives of some authors, on religious subjects, form with their writings, may they not be said somewhat to resemble the workmen employed in building the ark? These infatuated men spent years in preparing an asylum from the deluge, without practically believing that it would ever take place. While they were mechanically employed in working for the salvation of the others, their labour made no provision for their own safety. The sweeping flood descends; but the builders are excluded from the very refuge which they have assisted in providing!

How different was the conduct of our apostle? His exhortation in this, as in all other instances, derives great additional weight from the consistency of his conduct with his writings. The philosopher Seneca, composed his excellent book of Ethics, in the same city, and near the same time in which this Epistle to Timothy was written. He suffered also a violent death under the same Roman emperor with Saint Paul. In the writings of the philosopher are many beautiful passages directed against the vice we have been considering, and no one ever inveighed more pointedly against the luxurious indulgences to which riches are applied. Yet Seneca, first the disciple of the abstinent school of Pythagoras, and afterwards of the self-denying sect of the Stoics, made himself, by his inordinate desire of amassing wealth, the richest man in Rome, and by his passion for splendour the most magnificent.

This inconsistency of profession with practice, at once illustrates the exact difference between speculation and conviction, conceit and truth; and serves, without any other arguments which, however, are not wanting, to demonstrate the real character of Seneca. Though acquainted probably with the religion of Jesus Christ, and not improbably with our apostle himself, from his near connection with Gallio, one of Paul's judges; yet he can never be considered as its convert; and trying them by the testimony of their lives, we are obliged to conclude of these two martyred moralists, that Paul lived a Christian, and Seneca died a Heathen.

CHAP. XV.

On the genius of Christianity, as seen in Saint Paul.

HAD a sinful human being, ignorant of Christianity, labouring under the convictions of a troubled conscience, and dreading the retribution which that conscience told him his offence merited,—had such a being, so circumstanced, been called upon to devise the means of pardon and acceptance from an offended Creator, how eagerly, in the hope of relieving his tormented spirit, would he have put his imagination to the stretch! How busily would he have sharpened his invention, to suggest something difficult, something that should have exhausted all human means, that should put nature to the rack—penances, tortures, sacrifices,—all Lebanon for a burnt offering, thousands of rams for an atonement, rivers of oil for an oblation,—still concluding that he must perform the act with his own hands, still expecting that himself must be the agent of his own deliverance.

But when a full offer of peace, of pardon, of reconciliation, comes from the offended party, comes voluntarily, comes gratuitously, comes, not with the thunders of the burning mount, but in the still small voice of benignity and love,—free love, benignity, as unsought as unmerited;—when the trembling penitent is assured, in the cheering words of our apostle, that he shall be 'justified freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,'—when he is assured that all that is demanded on his part of the compact is to accept the propitiation made for his sins, through the forbearance and tender mercy of God; when he hears that to him, and not to him only, but to all who will accept it on the offered terms of faith and repentance, this previously inconceivable proposal is made;—who would doubt that, overwhelmed with joy and gratitude at the report of a world redeemed, he would eagerly fly to lay hold on [illegible], not

only beyond his hope or expectation, but beyond his possibility of conception?

Yet is not the fact too often directly the reverse? His pride had suggested to him, that if some difficult thing were to be done, he should have done it himself,—if something were to be suffered in the way of hardship and austerity, or something achieved in the way of glorious enterprise; something that should be splendid in the act, which should bring renown to the doer,—then his natural powers would be set at work, his energies exerted, his emulation kindled, for he would become the procurer of his own reward, the purchaser, or rather the rightful possessor of a heaven of his own earning.

But while God, by a way of his own devising, by a process of his own conducting, had made foolish the wisdom of this world, and baffled the vain and impracticable schemes of impotent man, for effecting his deliverance by any conception or act of his own,—does not man's unwillingness to partake of the offered mercy, look as if his proud heart did not choose to be freely forgiven, as if his haughty independence revolted at the plan, in which, though he has all the benefit, he has none of the merit? Does it not seem as if he would improve the terms of the treaty? as if he would mend the plan of salvation, and work it up into a kind of partnership scheme, in which his own contribution should have the predominance?

But it will be urged men do not say this; we reply, they do not profess it in words; but do not some say it virtually, when they practically decline the terms; or, if they do not entirely disbelieve them, give at least a reluctant, and partial and qualified assent?

With the genius of Christianity, with its peculiarities, with its applicableness to the wants of man, the whole soul of Saint Paul was singularly imbued. His acute mind, his lofty qualities, his penetrating spirit, and his renovated heart, entered profoundly into the character and essence of the gospel. His mind was a transcript of divine truth; his life an exemplification of it. What he conceived intimately, he imparted explicitly. To combat the rebellion of the natural man, against the salvation wrought for him, is the leading object of his endeavour. He who was always looking unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of his own faith, uniformly holds him out to others as the sum and substance of theirs.

He delights to dwell on the divine compassion; he introduces it under every form, he illustrates it by every figure, he magnifies it under every mode of expression. Reconciliation is the grand object of his mission. He exhibits the difference between the conduct of the Redeemer, and that of man, in this negociation. In human cases it is usually the offender who makes the advances, who tries all means to recover the friend he has lost, the patron he has offended. But here he shows it to be just the reverse. Here it is the insulted benefactor, here it is the injured friend, who conjures the offender to return, who entreats the enemy to be reconciled, who promises not only pardon but immunity, not only oblivion but reward. The penitent is every where encouraged to believe, that his offences are forgiven, that his sins have been punished in his Saviour; that the Judge has not only pardoned the malefactor, but has suffered in his stead.

The apostle demonstrates, that God is the fountain, not only of our mercies, but of our virtues—if we turn, it is he who turns us—if we pray, it is he who invites us—if we apply to him, it is he who first draws us—if we repent, it is 'the grace of God which leads us to repentance.' Whatever right thing there may be in us, it is not our natural property, but his gift. His bounty is the spring from which our goodness, if we have any, flows, instead of our goodness being the original motive of his love.

Hitherto we have sketched, though very superficially, Christianity as to its spirit, its design, its offers. We now turn to what is our more immediate object, its practical effects, its general results, its tranforming nature, its renovating power.

If the law of God is spiritual, it is not a conformity to its letter, nor is it partial conformity to its spirit, that constitutes Christian obedience. Christian obedience is ascertained by its universality. It esteems *all* God's precepts concerning *all* things to be right; it hates *every* false way. The prohibitory as well as the preceptive principle of the gospel is general. Though it makes much allowance for the infirmity of the act, it makes none as to its spirit; it confines its prescription to no particular duties, makes no exception for favourite virtues, to the exclusion of such as are more difficult, or less palatable. If Scripture had barely *informed* us, that it was the perfection of the Christian character, to unite in itself, not only different, but opposite qualities; if we had been only *told* that firmness is little worth, unless combined with meekness; that integrity is imperfect, if separated from humility; that the warmest zeal for the good of others, must, in order to be acceptable, be connected with the most vigilant attention to our own heart; that generosity is a spurious virtue, if disconnected with self-denial; that religion requires, with a consciousness of divinely infused strength, a deep sense of our own helplessness; that while it demands a trust in God, so complete, that we must renounce every other trust, it demands also a holiness so exact, as if we trusted only in ourselves.

If we had been only shown, in some thin theory, that it is the genius of Christianity thus to amalgamate contraries, to blend into one common principle, the deepest self-abasement with the most active exertions,—if all this had been proposed to us in an abstract way, or drily and didactically taught, we should have conceived Christianity to be a system of pleasing paradoxes, an invention of beautiful impracticabilities; we should have thought it an institution fabricated for some world, different from ours, for some race of immaculate beings, for angels who had stood firm in their pristine purity, for creatures who had never lost the impression of the Divine image; but never could we have imagined it to be a practical religion, intended for the fallible, peccable children of fallen mortality.

It has, however, as we observed in an early

chapter, pleased Infinite Wisdom to give us, in the sacred records, striking solutions of this enigma, actual instances of conflicting attributes in men of like passions with ourselves, men possessing qualities, which would seem to exclude each other, combining contrarieties of excellence. Among these, there is not a brighter exemplification, than the great apostle of the Gentiles.

Yet there is nothing in this high description, which exclusively belongs to Saint Paul. Nothing which does not address itself individually to us. Though converted by a miracle, favoured with divine revelations, writing, and frequently acting, under immediate inspiration; yet was he, in the ordinary condition and transactions of life, weak and helpless. Though sustained by Divine power, he did not monopolize it.—Nor was it specially vouchsafed to *him* for his common comforts; or earthly deliverances. It was not given to rescue him from suffering, but to uphold him under it. He was, like his Lord, exposed to all the exigencies of a laborious and afflicted life. He was obnoxious to all its trials, liable to the snares of the world, and to the temptations of the great spiritual enemy. If his conflicts were more in number, and greater in magnitude than ours, he obtained victory over them, by a power to which he directs *us*, a power to which we have equal access. The same sincerity of petition will procure the same gracious assistance; that grand resolver of doubt, that omnipotent vanquisher of difficulty—*my grace is sufficient for thee*—though directly addressed to Saint Paul, is also, through him, addressed to every one of us.

It was probably a charge brought against Saint Paul, that his conversion contributed little to the improvement of his moral and civil virtues. But such an allegation, if made, must have come from the party which he had quitted. They considered him as an apostate from the faith; they considered his zeal for the religion which he had once persecuted, as a degrading inconsistency, as a defection from all moral goodness. His subsequent life, which afforded the most lively comment on the new doctrines, is the best answer to such an allegation. His perseverance afforded a rational conviction, that the change was neither the effect of fear nor of fancy. A conduct corresponding to his first emotions, and a continually growing excellence, completely repel the charge.—He who in the first moment of alarm, exclaimed, *what wilt thou have me to do? did* through life all which he then desired to be taught.

Every convert should endeavour to produce in his measure and degree, the same proofs that he too is under no deception; he should give the same evidence, that he is misled by no fanciful illumination; and this can only be effected by exhibiting a change of conduct, not only obvious, but permanent; not only during the first terrors or transports of which we so frequently hear, but by a steady consecration of his whole future life to his Creator. Every other plea may be illusion, may be hypocrisy; while this test, being visible, will be incontrovertible. The more the penitent is observed; the more this paramount evidence will eventually remove all doubts. By his patient continuance in well-doing, he will be likely to lessen the objection not only to the individual professing it, but to the doctrine itself.

When we compare this blessed apostle, who now fears to wound the *feelings* of others, with the same man who had lately no regard even for their *lives;* the man who now treats with tenderness the very prejudices of Christians, with him who 'before made havoc of the church;'—the man whom we find weeping over all sufferings but his own, with him who had persecuted 'to the death;' when we consider him who aforetime was 'binding and imprisoning the followers of Jesus,' now burning with zeal for his cause, though he knew that punishments the most severe awaited himself; him who had been assisting at the death of the first martyr, now heroically pursuing that course which he was forewarned would lead to his own martyrdom; the man who 'destroyed them who called on the name of Jesus,' now 'confounding the Jews, and proving that this is indeed the very Christ'—shall we, when we see these astonishing results, refuse our homage to the transforming genius of Christianity—to that power which enabled this fierce assailant to 'put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?'

Saint Paul did not furnish such authentic evidence of that power of God which produced this total revolution in the character, merely by suffering death in confirmation of his faith—for error has had its confessors, and idolatry its martyrs,—but he proved it by the persevering holiness of a long and tormented life; he proved it, by suffering himself as courageously as he taught others to suffer. May we venture to add, he gave a testimony, less accredited perhaps, but almost more convincing. The conceited Pharisee is become the humblest of men; the proud bigot is meekness personified.—This *change of disposition* is the surest test of his total renovation. The infusion of a heavenly temper, where a bad one had predominated, is one of the rarest results of Almighty Power. And it not only affords a substantial proof of the individual improvement, but furnishes one of the most striking displays of the distinguishing character of our religion.

It is owing to this specific character of Christianity that, while philosophy had gloried in its wisdom, Saint Paul glories only in his weakness. If he ever exults, it is in the strength of the hand which employs him. His confidence in this supernatural strength explains his paradox, *when I am weak then I am strong.* Sometimes, indeed, he boasts of himself, but it is always of his disadvantages. He avows his determination not to avail himself of any personal acquirements; and after his utmost success in 'winning souls,' he expressly disclaims that *excellency of speech* which others consider as the grand instrument for converting them. He strips himself of all ground of boasting; acknowledges that he comes *in weakness, in fear, in much trembling;* and requires that the glory of every success which attended his labours might be wholly ascribed to God. He demonstrates that all the wisdom

with which the world had been dazzled, was to be eclipsed by that *hidden wisdom* 'which none of the princes of this world knew,' and their ignorance of which was the only extenuation that he offers of their guilt in 'crucifying the Lord of Glory.'

The same trials seem in some measure to have been reserved for Saint Paul which had been sustained by his Lord. This was perhaps determined, that he might glorify God by meeting them in the same spirit; and thus might leave a human example of the highest Christian attainment. Of Jesus it is recorded, that 'his disciples all forsook him and fled.' Like him Saint Paul declared, in his last appearance before the Roman tribunal, 'no man stood by me, but all men forsook me.' As the Master had prayed for his cruel enemies,—'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,' so Paul interceded for his faithless—'I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.' Even under this severest blow to natural feelings, the desertion of those we love, holy Paul forgets not to glorify 'the Lord, who stood by him, and strengthened him;' and who enabled him to act a part consistent with his Christian profession, and to bear an honourable testimony to the truth of the Gospel before his persecuting judges.

Thus again did he resemble his great Exemplar, 'who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession.' And may we not suppose that this example of heroic constancy assisted in sustaining our Latimers and our Ridleys, when, by manifesting a similar spirit under similar sufferings, they showed their cause and their confidence to be so nearly allied to those of the apostle?

Nor does Christianity, (as we shall have occasion to observe more at large hereafter,) limit the exercise of this temper to apostles and martyrs, but enjoins it under the inferior trials of common life.

Finally, the judgments of heaven bore the same kind of testimony to the truth of the Gospel, in the prison at Philippi, as it had done on the Mount of Calvary. In the one instance, 'Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.' In the other, 'Suddenly there was a great earthquake, the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, the chains were loosened, the captives were freed, the jailor was converted!' Are not all these circumstances, taken together, a clear solution of Saint Paul's otherwise obscure declaration, that he thus *filled up what remained of the sufferings of Christ*? Did the sense of victory, did the joys of peace, did the honourable scars brought from the field of battle, ever excite such a feeling in the mind of the conqueror as Saint Paul felt at thus *bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus*, and at the encouragement they gave him to achieve new conquests?

What a strange use does Paul immediately make of his scourgings and imprisonment at Philippi? He uses them as an argument why his *entrance into Thessalonica was not in vain!* His shameful treatment at the former place, instead of intimidating him from further services, redoubled his courage to preach to the Thessalonians that very Gospel which had procured him such disgraceful treatment at Philippi. On this occasion he adduces a touching instance of the effect of his imprisonment, which, though striking, is not singular to those who understand the genius of Christianity. His unjust captivity, as the champion of the new faith, which, in the opinion of those to whom the motive principle of our religion is unknown, would have been likely to extinguish the flame, had only served in his estimation to fan it. Others, timid before, 'grew more confident,' by the very bonds which were intended to discourage them. Their fears were absorbed in their faith, and the chains of the Saint caused a wider and more rapid diffusion of that Gospel which they were intended to stop. And though 'some preached Christ of contention,' yet holy Paul was so exhilarated by the general success, that he was less solicitous about the motives of the instructor, than the progress of the instruction. He looked for the benefit rather from the power of the Gospel, than from the purity of the preacher.

We have repeatedly observed, that an ardent affection was one of the prominent features in Saint Paul's character: it is natural, therefore, that the expression of this temper should be particularly stamped on his writings. If he expresses this satisfaction with more unmingled delight to any one church than another, it seems to be to that which he had planted at Philippi. He appears to repose himself with grateful joy on their fidelity, and with assured hope in their progress. In every prayer he makes request for them, with a joy, which manifested the dependence he had on their perseverance. This was a proof that his 'confidence' did not abate the necessity of his supplications, though he made them with a joy which this confidence inspired. While his knowledge of the fluctuations of the human heart led him to rejoice with trembling, yet the continuance of this favoured church in the principles into which they had been initiated by his visit to them ten years before, gave him a reasonable ground of their persevering steadfastness.

This church afforded an eminent proof not only of its attachment to Paul, its founder, but of its zeal for Christianity. Not satisfied with advancing the credit of religion, and assisting its ministers in their own country, with a truly catholic spirit, these Philippian converts repeatedly sent money to Paul at Thessalonica, that, by relieving the Christians there from the expense which would attend the establishment of the Gospel, they might be led to conceive a higher idea of the religion itself by the disinterestedness of its ministers. This generous superiority to any lucrative views, gave Paul a marked advantage over their philosophical teachers, who bestowed no gratuitous instruction.

The apostle gratefully considers it as one of the practical effects of the confirmed piety of his beloved Philippians, that they were so liberally kind to himself; he received their affectionate services to the aged, afflicted, and now imprisoned servant of Jesus Christ, as a proof of their fealty to his Lord. An ambassador, though in bonds, will still be considered as a representative of his king, by every liege subject.

With what cordiality does he solemnly attest the Omniscient to the truth of his attachment to them, and his desire to see them!

Highly, however, as he estimates their religious improvement, he does not consider them as having attained that elevation of character which renders monition superfluous, or advancement unnecessary; for he exhorts even 'as many as be perfect,' that they press forward and reach forth unto those things which are before: in his usual humble way identifying himself with those he is admonishing—'Let *us* be thus minded.'

Again—'Though he is confident that he that begun a good work in them,' will accomplish it, yet they must still work out their salvation; but lest they might be tempted to value themselves on their exertions, they are instantly reminded who it is that 'worketh in them to will and to do.' Though they *professed* the Gospel, 'their conversation must be such as becometh it.' To accomplish his full desire, their love, already so great, must 'abound more and more.' Nor would he be satisfied with an ignorant or disorderly piety—their love must manifest itself *more and more* 'in knowledge and judgment:' in knowledge, by a perpetual acquisition; in judgment, by a practical application of that knowledge.

How little, in the eyes of the sober Christian, does the renowned Roman, who, scarcely half a century before, sacrificed his life to his appointment, at this very Philippi, appear, in comparison of the man who addressed this epistle to the same city! Saint Paul was not less brave than Brutus, but his magnanimity was of a higher strain. Paul was exercised in a long series of sufferings, from which the sword of Brutus, directed by any hand but that of Paul himself, would have been a merciful deliverance. Paul, too, was a patriot, and set a proper value on his dignity as a Roman citizen. He too was a champion for freedom, but he fought for that higher species of liberty

'Unsung by Poets, and by Senators unprais'd.'

Was it courage of the best sort, in the Roman enthusiast for freedom, to abandon his country to her evil destiny, at the very moment when she most needed his support? Was it true generosity or patriotism, after having killed his friend, to whom he owed his fortune and his life,* usurper though he was, voluntarily to leave this adored country a prey to *inferior* usurpers? Though Cæsar had robbed Rome of her liberty, should Brutus rob her of his own guardian virtues? Why not say to the Romans, as Paul did to the Philippians—*Though I desire to depart, nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you?* This would have been indeed patriotism, because it would have been disinterested. Was not Paul's the truer heroism? He also was in a *strait between two* events, life and death. He knew what Brutus, alas! did not know, 'that to die was gain;' but, instead of deserting his cause, by a pusillanimous self-murder, he submitted to live for its interest. The gloomy despair of the Stoic, and the cheerful submission of the Saint, present a lively contrast of the effects of the two religions on two great souls.

It is a coincidence too remarkable to be passed over in silence, that Paul was directed by '*a vision from heaven*' to go to Philippi; that Brutus was summoned to the same city by his *evil genius*. The hero obeyed the phantom; the apostle was 'not disobedient to the heavenly vision;' to what different ends, let the concluding histories of the devoted suicide and the devoted martyr declare! Will it be too fanciful to add, that the spectre which lured the Roman to his own destruction, and the vision which in the same place invited the apostle to preach salvation to others, present no unapt emblem of the opposite genius of Paganism and Christianity.

* At the battle of Pharsalia.

CHAP. XVI.

Saint Paul's respect for constituted authorities.

The Gospel was never intended to dissolve the ancient ties between sovereign and subject, master and servant, parent and child, but rather to draw them closer, to strengthen a natural by a lawful and moral obligation. As the charge of disaffection was, from the first, most injurious to the religion of Jesus, it is obvious why the apostle was so frequent, and so earnest, in vindicating it from this calumny.

It is apparent from every part of the New Testament, that our Lord never intended to introduce any change into the civil government of Judea, where he preached, nor into any part of the world to which his religion might extend. As his object was of a nature specifically different, his discourses were always directed to that other object. His politics were uniformly conversant about his own kingdom, which was not of this world. If he spake of human governments at all, it was only incidentally, as circumstances led to it, and as it gave occasion to display or enforce some act of obedience. He discreetly entangled the Pharisees in the insidious net which they had spread for him, by directing, in answer to their ensnaring question, that the things which belonged even to the sovereign whom they detested, should be 'rendered' to him.

Saint Paul exhibited at once a striking proof of the soundness of his own principles, and of the peaceable character of Christianity, in his full and explicit exposition of the allegiance due to the ruling powers. His thorough conviction that human nature was, and would be, the same in all ages, led him to anticipate the necessity of impressing on his converts the duty of rescuing the new religion, not only from present reproach, but from that obloquy to which he foresaw that it would always be exposed.

He knew that a seditious spirit had been alleged against his Lord. He knew, that as it was with the master so it must be with the servant. One was called a 'pestilent fellow;' another 'a stirrer-up of the people:' others were charged with 'turning the world upside down.'

These charges, invented and propagated by the Jews, were greedily adopted by the persecuting Roman emperors, and their venal instruments; and have always been seized on and brought forward as specious pretences for exile, proscription, massacre.

Many of the Protestant Reformers were afterwards accused, or suspected, of the same factious disposition; and if a similar accusation has not been boldly produced, it has been insidiously implied, against some of the most faithful friends of the government, and of the ecclesiastical constitution of our own country; as if a more than ordinary degree of religious activity rendered their fidelity to the state suspicious, and their hostility to the church certain. We do not deny, that though Christianity has never been the cause, it has often been made the pretence for disaffection. Religion has been made the handle of ambition by Popery, and of sedition by some of the Puritan Reformers. Corruption in both cases was stamped upon the very face of those who so used it. Nothing, however, can be more unfair, than *eagerly* to charge religious profession with such dangers, which yet the instances alluded to have given some of our high churchmen a plausible plea for *always* doing. This plea, though in certain cases justly furnished, has been most unjustly used by being applied to instances to which it is completely inapplicable.

For the truth is, that a factious spirit is so far from having any natural connection with the religion of the Gospel, that it stands in the most direct opposition to it. Saint Paul, in taking particular care to vindicate Christianity from any such aspersion, shows that obedience to constituted authorities is among the express commands of our Saviour. He might have added to the strength of his assertion, by adducing his example also; for, in order to be enabled to comply with a law of government, Christ did, what he had never done to supply his own necessities—he wrought a miracle.

The apostle knowing the various shifts of men, from their natural love of gain, to evade paying imposts, is not content with a general exhortation on this head, but urges the duty in every conceivable shape, and under every variety of name, as if to prevent the possibility of even a verbal subterfuge—*tribute*, *custom*, *fear*, *love*, *honour*, *fidelity in payment;* and then, having exhausted particulars, he sums them up in a general—*owe no man any thing*. Thus he leaves not only no public opening, but no secret crevice to fiscal fraud. *

Perhaps it is an evidence, in this instance, rather of the sagacious, than of the prescient, spirit which governed Saint Paul; that there is as much tendency to it now, as when the apostle first published his prohibitory letter. The known principles of human nature, as we have just observed, might lead us to expect it alike in all ages. At the same time, we cannot be too mindful of that command of Inspiration, which, by enjoining us to render to all their dues, has enlarged the sphere of civil duty to the very utmost limit of human actions. And it is no little credit to Christianity, that intimations are so frequently repeated, by *all* the apostles *to all* classes of society, that their having become Christians was the very reason why all their lawful obligations should be the more scrupulously discharged.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul preach the same doctrine, but most judiciously apply their injunctions to the different modes of government under which their several converts lived. Saint Peter, who wrote *to the strangers scattered through Pontus*, *Asia*, &c. where the governments were arbitrary, orders them *first to obey the king as supreme*. Saint Paul, addressing the people of Rome, where it is well known the emperor and the senate did not always act in concurrence, with his usual exquisite prudence makes choice of an ambiguous expression, *the higher powers*, without specifically determining what those powers were.

Loyalty is a cheap quality, where a good government makes a happy people. It is then an obligation, without being a virtue.—That every man should be obedient to the existing powers, is a very easy injunction to us, who are living under the mildest government, and the most virtuous king. When Paul enjoined his beloved disciple 'to put the people in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates,'—had the Episcopal Titus been acting under the merciful government of the Imperial Titus, Paul might have been denied any merit in giving this authoritative mandate, or the bishop in obeying it; it might have been urged, that the injunctions were accommodated to a sovereign whose commands it would be unreasonable to dispute.

The submission which Saint Paul practised and taught was a trial of a higher order, but though hard, it was not too hard for his principles. To enjoin and to practice implicit obedience, where Nero was the supreme authority, furnished him with a fair occasion for exhibiting his sincerity on this point.—Never let it be forgotten for the honour of Christianity, and of the apostle who published it, that Paul chose to address his precepts of civil obedience to the Christians at Rome, under the most tyrannical of all their tyrants. He commands them to *submit for conscience sake*, to a sovereign, who, —their enemy, Tacitus, gives the relation,— made the martyrdom of the Christians his personal diversion; who burnt them alive by night in the streets, that the flames might light him to the scene of his licentious pleasures.

In the first three centuries, till the Roman government became Christian, there is not, we believe, an instance upon record, of any insurrection against legitimate authority.—Tertullian, in his 'Apology,' challenges the Pagans to produce a single instance of sedition, in which any of the Christians had been concerned; though their numbers were become so great, as to have made their opposition formidable, while the well-known cruel and vengeful principle of their oppressors would have rendered it desperate. Even that philosophical politician Montesquieu acknowledged, that in those countries where Christianity had even imperfectly taken root, rebellions have been less frequent than in other places.

* Romans xiii.

Nor did Saint Paul indemnify himself for his public submission, by privately villifying the lawful tyrant: the emperor is not only not named, but is not pointed at. There is not one of those sly inuendos, which the artful subverters of states know how to employ, when they would undermine the stability of law, without incuring its penalty.—He betrays no symptom of an exasperating spirit, lurking behind the shelter of prudence, and the screen of legal security.

It is observable, that in the very short period, from the origin of Christianity under Augustus to the time at which Saint Paul wrote, there were four successive Roman emperors, each of whom was worse than the preceding, as if it had been providentially so determined, as a test of the meek and quiet spirit of Christianity, whose followers never manifested resistance to any of these oppressive masters.

Paul knew how to unite a respect for the government, with a just abhorrence of the vices of the governor. We are not advocating the cause of passive obedience—but it may be fairly observed, in this connection, that political passions are so apt to inflame the whole mind, that it is dangerous for those, who are professionally devoted to the service of religion, to be too powerfully influenced by them.

I believe there has been no government, under which Christianity has not been able to subsist. When the ruling powers were lenient to it, and especially when they afforded it protection, it has advanced in secular prosperity, and external grandeur; when they have been intolerant, its spirit has received a fresh internal impulse; it has improved in spiritual vigour, as if it had considered oppression only as a new scene for calling new graces into exercise.

With the specific nature of the populace, in all countries, Paul was well acquainted. He knew that till religion has operated on their hearts, they have but one character. Of this character we have many correct, though slight sketches, in the New Testament. Now we hear the stupid clamour of the Ephesian idolaters, vociferating, for two hours, their one* phrase. Then we see that picture of a mob, so exactly alike in all ages, from the uproar in the streets of Ephesus, to the riots in the streets of Westminster; 'the greater part knew not wherefore they were come together.' On another occasion, 'the certainty could not be known for the tumult.' Then their mutable caprice, changing with the impulse of the event, or of the moment. When the viper fastened on Paul's hand, 'he was a murderer,' when he shook it off unhurt, 'he was a god.'† At Lystra the same people who had offered him Divine honours, no sooner heard the false reports of the Jews from Antioch, than *they stoned him and dragged him out of the city as a dead man.*'‡ It was the very spirit which dictated the 'Hosanna' of one day, and the 'crucify him' of the next.

Saint Paul well knew these wayward motions of the mob. He knew also that, without the faculty of thinking, their gregarious habit gave them a physical force, which was a substitute for rational strength; and that this instinctive and headlong following the herd, without reason without consistency, makes them as formidable by their aggregate number, as they are inconsiderable by their individual weight. Yet, did he ever attempt to turn the knowledge, in which he was so well versed, to a political purpose? Did he ever cajole the multitude, as an engine to lift himself into power or popularity? Did he consider them, as some designing orators have done, the lowest round in ambition's ladder, by which, its foot fixed in the dirt, they strive to scale the summit of public favour; alluring by flattery beings they despise, and paying them by promises, which they know they shall never be able to keep.

Saint Paul's love of order is an additional proof of the soundness of his political character. He uses his influence with the vulgar, only to lead them to obedience. Nor did he content himself with verbal instructions to obey; he seconded them by a method the most practically efficient. Together with order itself, he enjoined on the people those industrious habits which are the very soul of order. He was a most rigorous punisher of idleness, that powerful cherisher of insubordination in the lower orders. Not to eat was the penalty he inflicted on those who would not work. He commands the Thessalonian converts 'to correct the disorderly'—again enjoining, that 'with quietness they work and eat their own bread.'—'Stirrers up of the people' never command them to work. and though they promise them bread, knowing they shall never be able to give it to them, yet they do not, like Paul, command them to eat it in peace. By thus encouraging peaceable and laborious habits, he was at once ensuring the comforts of the people, and the security of the state. Are those exhortations, is this conduct, any proof of that tendency to faction, which has been so often charged on the religion of Jesus?

In his political discretion, as well as in all other points, Paul imitates his Lord. Jesus, in the earlier part of his ministry, was extremely cautious of declaring who he was, never but once owned himself to be the Messiah; when at last, knowing 'that his hour was come,' he scrupled not to express his resentment publicly against the Sanhedrim, by almost the only strong expression of indignation. Which Infinite Wisdom, clothed in Infinite Meekness, ever thought fit to use. Even then, he said nothing against the civil governor.

But while Paul thus proved himself a firm supporter of established authorities, as such, he would not connive at any formal act of injustice, while he resigned himself to the Roman powers, his lawful judges, he would not submit to be condemned illegally by the Jews. When he appealed to Cæsar, he declared with a dignified firmness becoming his character, that though he refused not to die, he would be tried by the rightful judicature.

If it be objected, that, in a single instance, he sharply rebuked Ananias for violating the law, by commanding him to be punished unjustly; he immediately cleared himself from the charge of contumacy, by declaring 'he knew not that it was the High Priest;' and instantly took occasion to extract a maxim of obedience from his

* Acts, xix. † Acts, xxviii. ‡ Acts, xv.

own error; and to render it more impressive sanctioned it by Scriptural authority, *It is written*, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.'*

It must have been obvious to his Pagan judges, that he never interfered with their rights, or even animadverted on their corruptions. His real crime in their eyes, was, not his intermeddling with government, but his converting the people. It was by exposing the impositions of their mercenary priests, by declaring *their idols ought not to be worshipped*, that he inflamed the magistrates; and they were irritated, not so much as civil governors, as guardians of their religion. He knew the consequences of his persevering fidelity, and like a true servant of the true God, never shrunk from them.

To complete the character of his respect to authorities, he sanctifies loyalty, by connecting it with piety. He expressly exhorts the new bishop of the Ephesians,† that throughout his Episcopal jurisdiction, 'prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for kings and all in authority;'—and adds, as a natural consequence of the obligation, arising from the reciprocal connection, 'that subjects may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' There could not have been devised a more probable method of insuring allegiance; for would it not be preposterous to injure or vilify those, for whom we make it a conscience to pray?

Yet even this important duty may be overestimated, when men's submission to kings is considered as paramount to their duty to 'another king, one Jesus.' An instance of this we have seen exemplified in our own time, though it has pleased Almighty Goodness to overrule it to the happiest results. And among the triumphs of religion which we have witnessed, it is not the least considerable, that, whereas Christianity was originally charged with a design to overturn states and empires, *we* have seen the crime completely turned over to the accusers; *we* have seen the avowed adversaries of Christ become the strenuous subverters of order, law, and government.

To name only one of the confederated band:—Voltaire had reached the pinnacle of literary fame and general admiration, not, it is to be hoped, *for* his impiety, but *in spite* of it. The fearful consequences of his audacious blasphemies were hid behind those graces of style, that gay wit, those fascinating pleasantries, that sharp, yet bitter raillery, which, if they did not conceal the turpitude, decorated it, and obtained, for his profaneness, something more than pardon. His boldness increased with his impunity. He carried it with a high hand, against the whole scheme of revelation; substituting ridicule for argument, and assertion for fact; and then, reasoning from his own misrepresentations, as consequentially as if he had found the circumstances he invented.

But the missile arrows of his lighter pieces, barbed, pointed, and envenomed, (the exact characters of that slender weapon) proved the most destructive in his warfare upon Christianity; and he could replenish his exhaustless quiver, with the same unparalleled celerity with which he emptied it. The keen sagacity of his mind taught him, that witty wickedness is of all the most successful. Argumentative impiety hurts but few, and generally those who were hurt before. Besides it requires in the reader a talent, or at least a taste, congenial with the writer; in this idle age it requires also the rare quality of patient investigation; a quality not to be generally expected, when our reading has become almost as dissipated as our pleasures, and as frivolous as our conversation.

For though Voltaire contrived to make every department of literature the medium of corruption; though the most unpromising and least suspected vehicles were pressed into the service to assist his ruling purpose; yet historical falsehoods might be refuted by adverting to purer sources, unfair citations might be contradicted, by refering to the originals. The popular engine of mischief is not the art of reasoning, but the art of raillery. The danger lies not in the attempt to prove a thing to be false, so much as in the talent which aims to make what is true, ridiculous; not so much in attacking, as in misstating, not in inverting, but in discolouring.

Metaphysical mischief is tedious to the trifling, and dull to the lively. Who now reads the 'Leviathan?' Who has *not* read Candide? 'Political Justice,' a more recent work, subversive of all religious and social order, was too ponderous to be popular, and too dry to answer the end of general corruption. But when the substance, by that chemical process well known to the preparers of poison, was *rubbed down* into an amusing novel, then it began to operate; the vehicle, though made pleasant, did not lessen the deleterious quality.

In Voltaire, a sentiment that cut up hope by the roots was compressed into a phrase as short as the motto of a ring, and as sparkling as the brilliants which encompass it. Every one can repeat an epigram, and even they who cannot understand, can circulate it. The fashionable laughed before they had time to think; the dread of not being supposed to have read, what all were reading, stimulated those who read, in order that they might talk. Little wits came to sharpen their weapons at the forge of this Philistine, or to steal small arms from his arsenal.

The writer of these pages has not forgotten the time when it was a sort of modish competition who could first produce proof that they had received the newest pamphlet from Ferney, by quoting from it; and they were gratified to find that the attributes of intelligence and good taste were appended to their gay studies. Others indulged with a sort of fearful delight, in the perilous pleasure. Even those who could not read, without indignation, did not wait, without impatience. Each successive work, like the book in the Apocalypse, was 'so sweet in the mouth,' that they forgot to anticipate the bitterness of digestion. Or, to borrow a more awful illustration from the same divine source, 'A star fell from heaven on the waters, burning like a lamp, and the star was called Wormwood; and many died of the waters, because they were made bitter.' That bright genius, which might have illuminated the world, became a destructive

* Acts, ch. xxiii. † Timothy.

flame, and, like the burning brand thrown by the Roman soldier into the Temple of Jerusalem, carried conflagration into the Sanctuary.

At length, happily for rescuing the principles, but most injuriously for the peace and safety of society, the polished courtier became a furious anarchist. The idol of monarchical France, the equalized associate of the Royal Author of Berlin, changed his political note, the parasite of princes, and the despot of literature, sounded the trumpet of Jacobinism. The political and moral world shook to their foundation. Earth below trembled. Heaven above threatened. All was insecurity. Order seemed reverting to original chaos. The alarm was given. Britain first awoke, roused by the warning voice of Burke. Enthusiasm was converted into detestation. The horror which ought to have been excited by his impiety was reserved for his democracy. But it was found that he could not subvert thrones with the same impunity with which he had laboured to demolish altars. He gave, indeed, the same impulse to sedition, which he had long given to infidelity, and by his own activity increased the velocity of both. The public feeling was all alive, and his political principles justly brought on his name that reprobation which had been long due to his blasphemies, but which his blasphemies had failed to excite.

Divine Providence seems to have spared him to extreme old age, that by adding one crime more to his long catalogue, his political outrages might counteract his moral mischiefs. But his wisdom seems to have been equally short-sighted in both his projects. While the consequences of his designs against the governments of the world, probably outran his intentions, his scheme for the extinction of Christianity, and for the obliteration of the very name of its author, fell short of it. Peace, law, and order are restored to the desolated nations. Kings are reinstated on their rightful thrones, and many of the subjects of the King of kings, it is hoped, are returned to their allegiance.

The abilities of this powerful but pernicious genius, were not more extraordinary than their headlong, yet diversified course. His talents took their bent from the turn of the age in which he was cast. His genius was his own, but its determination was given from without. He gave impressions as forcibly, as he yielded to them suddenly. It was action and reaction. He lighted on the period, in which, of all others, he was born to produce the most powerful sensation. The public temper was agitated; he helped on the crisis. Revolt was ripening; he matured it. Circumstances suggested his theories; his theories influenced circumstances. He was inebriated with flattery, and mad with success; but his delirious vanity defeated its own ends; in his greediness for instant adoration he neglected to take future fame into his bold but brief account.

> 'Vaulting ambition overleap'd itself,
> And fell on t'other side.'

CHAP. XVII.

St. Paul's attention to Inferior Concerns.

It is one great advantage of epistolary writing that it is not subject to the general laws of composition, but admits of every diversity of miscellaneous matter. Topics which might be thought beneath the dignity of a Treatise, or inconsistent with the solemnity of a Sermon, or the gravity of a Dissertation, find their proper place in a letter. Details of which are not of the first importance, may yet be of such a nature as to require notice or animadversion.

The epistolary form has also other advantages; it not only admits of a variety of subjects, but of the most abrupt transition, from one subject to another, however dissimilar. It requires not the connecting links of argumentative composition, nor the regularity of historical, nor the uniformity of ethical; nor the method and arrangement of each and of all these. The free mind, unfettered by critical rules, expatiates at will, soars or sinks, skims or dives, as the objects of its attention may be elevated or depressed, profound or superficial.

Of the character of this species of writing, the authors of epistles of the New Testament have most judiciously availed themselves. Saint Paul, especially, has taken all due advantage of the latitude it allows. His epistles, though they contain the most profound reasoning, and on the most important subjects on which the mind of man can be engaged, are not, exclusively, regular discussions of any set topics; though they breathe strains of devotion almost angelic, yet do they also frequently stoop to the concerns of ordinary life: partaking, as occasion requires, of all that familiarity, versatility, and ease, which this species of writing authorizes. Yet though occasional topics and incidental circumstances are introduced, each epistle has some particular drift, tends to some determined point, and, amidst frequent digressions, still maintains a consistency with itself, as well as with the general tendency of Scripture; the method being sometimes concealed, and the chain of argument not obvious, the closest attention is required, and the reader, while he may be gathering much solid instruction, reproof or consolation, from scattered sentences, and independent axioms, will not, without much application of mind, embrace the general argument.

Amidst, however, all the higher parts of spiritual instruction; amidst all the solidity of deep practical admonition, there is not, perhaps, a single instance in which this author has omitted to inculcate any one of the little morals, any one even of what may be called those minor circumstances, which constitute the decorums and decencies of life. Nor does his zeal for promoting the greatest actions, ever make him unmindful of the grace, the propriety, the manner in which they are to be performed.

It is one of the characteristic properties of a great mind that it can, 'contract as well as dilate itself;' and we have it from one of the highest human authorities, that the mind which cannot do both is not great in its full extent.* The minuter shades of character do not of themselves make up a valuable person; they may be possessed in perfection, separate from great excel-

* Lord Bacon.]

knce. But as that would be a feeble mind, which should be composed of inferior qualities only, so that would be an imperfect one, in which they were wanting. To all the strong lines of character, Saint Paul added the lighter touches, the graceful filling up which finish the portrait.

In a character which forcibly exhibits all the great features of Christianity, these subordinate properties do not only make up its completeness, they give also an additional evidence of the truth and perfection of a religion which makes such a provision for virtue, as to determine that nothing which is right, however inconsiderable, can be indifferent. The attention to inferior duties is a symptom of a mind not satisfied with its attainments, not so full of itself, as to fancy that it can *afford* to be negligent; it is indicative of a mind humble enough to be watchful, because it is suspicious of itself; of a conscience ever on its guard, that its infirmities may not grow into vices, nor its occasional neglects into allowed omissions. But it is chiefly anxious, that its imperfections may not be brought as a charge against religion itself; for may not its enemies say, if he is neglectful of small and easy duties, which cost little, is it probable that he will be at much pains about such as are laborious and difficult? Saint Paul never leaves an opening for this censure. He always seems to have thought small avenues worth guarding, small kindnesses worth performing, small negligences worth avoiding: and his constant practical creed is, that nothing that is a sin is small; that nothing that is right is insignificant. But Saint Paul was an accurate master of moral proportion. He took an exact measure of the positive and relative value of things. If he did not treat small objects as great ones—If he did not lift proprieties into principles, he by no means overlooked them; he never wholly neglected them. He graduated the whole scale of doctrine, and of action, of business and of opinion, assigning to every thing its place according to its worth.

Though he did not think the dissention in religious opinions between two individuals, Euodias and Syntyche* of as much importance as the contentions and schisms in the church of the Corinthians, yet he thought it of sufficient importance to be healed; and anxiously desired to reconcile them, to 'make them of one mind in the Lord.' He knew that disunion is not only unfavourable to the piety of the persons at variance, but that, while it gratifies the enemies, it injures the cause of religion.

But if he gives their due importance to inferior, though necessary duties, he draws a still nicer line in regard to matters in themselves indifferent. The eaters of herbs and the eaters of flesh are alike, in his estimation, as to the act; but when the indulgence in the latter becomes a temptation to an undecided believer, then, even, this trifling concession was no longer a matter of indifference. It became then a just ground for the exercise of self-denial, which perhaps he was not sorry to have the opportunity of enforcing.

* Philippians, ch. iv.

He knew that there were persons who profess to have made a great proficiency in piety, who are not defective in point of cheap attainment, but *are* defective in the more difficult attainments which involve self-denial; persons who, though very spiritual in their conversation, are somewhat selfish in their habits; who talk much of faith, and yet decline the smallest sacrifice of ease; who profess to do all for Christ, but do little for his poor members. He wished to see a high profession always accompanied with a corresponding practice. The Israelites, who were so forward to exclaim, 'all that the Lord hath commanded us we will do,' went and made them a golden calf.

In the mind of our apostle, all is consistent. He that said, 'Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus,' said also, *let all things be done decently and in order.* Right things must be done in a right manner. This simple precept indicates the soberness of Paul's mind. An enthusiast has seldom much dislike to disorderly conduct; on the contrary, he has generally a sovereign contempt for small points, indeed for every thing which does not exclusively tend to advance the one object, whatever that may be, which is nearest his heart.

Saint Paul sometimes appends small objects to great ones, thus increasing their importance by their position. Immediately after giving his exquisite portrait of charity,* he goes at once to recommend and enforce, by powerful illustrations, certain proprieties of behaviour in the public congregations.—Knowing the readiness of the world to catch at the slightest irregularity in religious professors, he puts them on their guard 'not to let their good be evil spoken of;' but wishes that they might acquit themselves unexceptionably as to manner, in things which were already right as to the matter.

From the high duties of Episcopal dignity, he stoops to the concerns of individuals of the most degraded condition. From the most important points of moral action in women, he descends to the very minutiæ of their apparel. This indicates how well aware he was, that every appearance of impropriety in personal adornment, is an implication of a wrong state of mind. If this seemingly inferior concern was not judged to be beneath the notice of an inspired apostle, surely it ought not to be unworthy the regard of my fair countrywomen.

One might have suspected, in the case of Paul, that the heavy load of cares, and sorrows, and persecutions; with the addition of ecclesiastical affairs, the most extensive and the most complicated, might have excused him from attending minutely to an object so inconsiderable, as the concerns of a poor run-away slave, 'the son of his bonds.'

Yet this once guilty, but now penitent servant, he condescends to make the exclusive subject of a letter to his late master.† This application to Philemon, in behalf of Onesimus, is a model in its kind; sincere, polite, tenderly affectionate to the convicted offender; strong, yet respectfully kind to his friend. In point of elo-

* 1 Corinthians, ch. xiii. and xiv.
† Epistle to Philemon.

gance and delicacy, in every excellence of composition, it may vie with any epistle of antiquity; and is certainly far superior, in ingenuity, feeling, warmth, and argument, to the admired letter of Pliny, in recommendation of his friend Arrianus Maturius.

There are people who sometimes forgive the piety of a man, in consideration of his influence, his reputation, his talents, or some other agreeable quality connected with it.—Genius is accepted by the world as a sort of atonement for religion; and wit has been known to obtain the forgiveness of the gay, for the strict principles of the grave. *Here* is a striking instance of two persons, connected by the closest ties of Christian friendship, who acted on other grounds. Philemon was not ashamed of his pious friend Paul, though a prisoner; nor was Paul ashamed of Onesimus, though a servant.

In urging his request on his friend, the apostle does not adopt the corrupt practice of too many, who, in order to put the person addressed in good humour, preface their petition by flattering him on some point, where, perhaps, he least deserves it. Paul, notwithstanding he would have reprobated such insincerity, yet thought it fair to remind Philemon of his high principles; thus indirectly to furnish him with a standard to which he expected his friend would act up.

He then proceeds to press his suit, with all the variety of argument and persuasion of which he was so great a master. His earnestness of entreaty, for so inconsiderable an object, conveys a lesson to ministers and to heads of families, that there is no human being so low as to be beneath their kindness; no offender so great as to be beyond their hope.

He had opened his request with a motive the most calculated to touch the heart of a Christian friend—*that he always made mention of him in his prayers.* This tender plea he follows up with the affectionate commendation of his Christian virtue, that the friend he was beseeching *abounded in love and faith*, not only 'to the Lord Jesus, *but to all saints.*'

After this soothing address, he urges his claims to the boon he was about to ask; in doing which, though he had been always mindful of the dignity of his Apostleship, he chose rather to sink this consideration in the more tender pleas of affection to his friend, and the distressed state of the person for whom he petitioned. 'Paul the aged, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' were touching and powerful motives: but what was likely to penetrate a generous mind, was, that the aged and imprisoned Paul, in sending back the penitent servant to his own master, and depriving himself of his attendance, was at once performing an act of justice and of self-denial. He would not detain him from his rightful owner, though he was so great a comfort to himself in his forlorn confinement. It was also a fine occasion of pressing on Onesimus, that the return to his duty would be the surest evidence of his conversion.

Thus anxiously, for an offending slave, does he seek to touch every spring of pity in the heart of his friend. Who would imagine that the man, who thus labours in the cause of so obscure an individual, had the superintendence of all the christian churches in the world?

But, with Paul, rectitude is always the prevailing principle. His zeal for his convert never makes him lose sight of the duty of restitution. Destitute, and a prisoner himself, he offers to make good the loss which Philemon might have sustained by his servant's misconduct. He candidly reminds him, however, how much the spiritual obligations of Philemon (his convert also) exceeded in value the debt due to him from Onesimus; though he refuses to avail himself of the plea. Thy servant perhaps owes thee a paltry sum of money—*thou owest me thine own self.*

With his characteristic disinterestedness, he not only thus pathetically pleads for him who was to receive the good, but for him who was to do it; as if he had said—Give me ground to rejoice in this evidence of thy christian benevolence. He farther stimulates him to this act of charity, by declaring the *confidence he had in his obedience;* thus encouraging him to the duty, by intimating the certainty of his compliance. An additional lesson is given to religious professors, not only that their being Christians includes their being charitable, but that no act of charity should infringe on the rights of justice.

We conclude, by remarking on the union of judgment and kindness in Saint Paul's conduct respecting Onesimus. He sends him back to Philemon at Colosse, as a proof, on the part of Onesimus, of penitent humility, and, on the part of Paul, of impartial equity. At the same time, he more than takes away his disgrace, by honouring him with the office, in conjunction with Tychicus, of being the bearer of his public epistle to the Colossian church. He confers on him the farther honour of naming him, in the body of his epistle, as a faithful and beloved brother.

How different is this modest and rational report by an inspired apostle, of a penitent criminal, a convert of his own; one who had survived his crimes long enough to prove the sincerity of his repentance by the reformation of his life;—how different is this sober narrative by a writer who considered restitution as a part of repentance, and humility as an evidence of faith, from those too sanguine reports which are now so frequently issuing from the press, of criminals brought to execution for violating all the laws of God and man!

The Gospel presents us but with one such instance; an instance which is too often pressed into a service where it has nothing to do; yet we far more frequently see the example of the penitent thief on the cross, brought forward as an encouragement to those who have been notorious offenders, than that of Onesimus though the latter is of general application, and the former is inapplicable to criminals in a Christian country; for the dying malefactor embraced Christianity the moment it was presented to him. This solitary instance, however, no more offers a justification than an example of fanatical fervours; for if it exhibits a lively faith, it exhibits also deep penitence, humility, and self condemnation. Nor does the just confidence

of the expiring criminal in the Redeemer's power, swell him into that bloated assurance, of which we hear in some late converts.

For in the tracts to which we allude, we hear not only of one, but of many, holy highwaymen, triumphant malefactors, joyful murderers! True, indeed, it is, that good men on earth rejoice with the angels in heaven, over even one sinner that repenteth. We would hope many of these were penitents; but as there was no space granted, as in the case of Onesimus, to prove their sincerity, we should be glad to see, in these statements, more contrition and less rapture. May not young delinquents be encouraged to go on from crime to crime, feeling themselves secure of heaven at last, when they see, from this incautious charity, that assurance of acceptance, which is so frequently withheld from the close of a life of persevering holiness, granted to the most hardened perpetrators of the most atrocious crime?

As it has been observed, that the baskets of the hawkers have *this year* abounded in these dangerous, though doubtless well-meant tracts, may not the lower class in general, and our servants in particular, be encouraged to look for a happy termination of life, not so much to the dying bed of the exemplary Christian as to the annals of the gallows? A few exceptions might be mentioned, honourable to the prudence, as well as to the piety, of the writers of some of these little narratives.

CHAP. XVIII.

Saint Paul on the Resurrection.

Before the introduction of Christianity, so dark were the notices of a state beyond the grave, that it is no wonder if men were little inclined to give up the pleasures and interest of one world, of which they were in actual possession, for the possibility of another, doubtful at best, and too indistinct for hope, too uncertain for comfort.

If a state of future happiness was believed, or rather guessed at, by a few of those who had not the light of revelation, no nation on earth believed it, no public religion in the world taught it. This single truth, then, firmly established, not only by the preaching of Jesus, but by his actual resurrection from the dead, produced a total revolution in the condition of man. It gave a new impulse to his conduct; infused a new vitality into his existence. Faith became to man an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. This anchorage enables him to ride out the blackest storms; and though he must still work out his passage, the haven is near, and the deliverance certain, 'while he keeps his eye to the star, and his hand to the stern.'

The value and importance, then, of this doctrine, seems to have made it an especial object of Divine care. Founded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, perhaps it may have afforded one reason, why the long-suffering of God permitted Jerusalem to stand near half a century after this last event had taken place. By this delay, not only the inhabitants of that city, but the multitudes who annually resorted thither, could gain full leisure to examine into its truth. Had the destruction followed immediately upon the crime which caused it, occasion might have been furnished to the Rabbies for asserting, that a truth could not now be authenticated, which was buried in the ruins of the city. Nor would the enemies of Jesus have scrupled any subordination to discredit his pretensions, even though at the expense of a doctrine, which involved the happiness of worlds unborn.

Jerusalem, however, survived for a time, and the doctrine of a resurrection was established for ever. And now, had it been a doctrine of any ordinary import, as Saint Paul was not writing to persons ignorant of the truths of Christianity, but to Christian converts, it might have been less his object to propound it dogmatically, than to develope and expand it; being a thing previously known, acknowledged, and received. In writing a letter, when we allude to facts already notorious, we do not think our notices the less acceptable, because we do not repeat intelligence already popular; while we content ourselves with drawing inferences from it, making observations upon it, or allusions to it. The reader, having in view the same object with the writer, would catch at intimations, seize on allusions, and fill up the implied meaning.

Such, however, was not Saint Paul's conduct with respect to this doctrine. There were indeed, it should seem, among his converts, many sceptical Jews, infected with the philosophizing spirit of the Grecian schools, and who doubted, what these last derided, the resurrection of the dead. Consequently, upon every account, Saint Paul is found to give it a peculiar prominence, and on all occasions to bestow upon it more argument and illustration, than on most other tenets of the new faith.

There is no profession, no class of men, whether Jew or Gentile, before whom Paul was not ready to be examined on this subject, and was not prompt to give the most decided testimony. Uniformly he felt the strength of evidence on his side; uniformly he appealed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as a fact established on the most solid basis,—a fact, not first propagated in distant countries, where the facility of imposition would have been greater; not at a distant period of time, when the same objection against it might have been made; but on the very spot where it occurred, at the very moment of its occurrence.

In his writings, also, the same confidence, the same urgency appears. He always adverts to this tenet, as to the main hinge on which the whole of Christianity turns. The more reasoning oppugners of the faith thought, that if this doctrine could be got rid of, either by argument or ridicule, it would subvert the whole fabric of Christianity. It was, in reality, the only *sensible* proof that could be adduced of the immortality of the soul; an opinion which, indeed, many of them professed to entertain, though they would not be indebted to this doctrine for its proof. The more, however, they oppugned, the more

he withstood; and of so high importance did he represent it, that he even makes 'believing in the heart that God hath raised Jesus from the dead,' to be a principal condition of salvation.

We must not judge of the inspired Saint Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the same canons of criticism, by which we pronounce judgment on other writers. Notwithstanding the elevation of his genius, his hand was in a great measure held, by the nature of his subject and his character, from the display of his talents as an author. From the warmth of his feelings, and the energy of his mind, we infer, that he possessed an imagination peculiarly bright. That he subdued, instead of indulging, this faculty, adds worth to his character, dignity to his writing, and confirmation to the truth. To suppress the exercise of a powerful imagination, is one sacrifice more, which a pious writer makes to God. Independently of that inspiration which guided him, his severe judgment would show him, that the topics of which he treated were of too high and holy a nature to admit the indulgence of a faculty rather calculated to excite admiration than to convey instruction.

In considering his general style of composition, we are not to look after the choice of words, so much as to the mind, and spirit, and character of the writer. If, however, we venture to select any one part of Saint Paul's writings, to serve as an exception to this remark, and to exhibit a more splendid combination of excellences than almost any other in his whole works, we should adduce the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he fully propounds the article in question. As our Lord's discourse, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, is the only explicit description of the last judgment; and Saint John's vision, at the close of the Apocalypse, the only distinct view given us of the heavenly glory; so this is the only graphical representation which Scripture has presented to us of this most important and consolatory doctrine, the resurrection of the dead.

The subject of this fifteenth chapter is quite distinct from that which precedes or follows it; it is interposed between matter quite irrelevant to it, forming a complete episode. As a composition, it stands unrivalled for the unspeakable importance of its matter, its deep reasoning, and lofty imagery. Saint Paul sometimes leaves it to others to beat out his massy thoughts into all the expansion of which they are so susceptible. His eloquence, indeed, usually consists more in the grandeur of the sentiment than in the splendour of the language. Here both are equally conspicuous. Here his genius breaks out in its full force: here his mind lights upon a subject which calls out all its powers; and the subject finds a writer worthy of itself. It furnishes a succession of almost every object that is grand in the visible and the invisible world. A description becomes a picture; an expostulation assumes the regularity of a syllogism; an idea takes the form of an image; the writer seems to be the spectator; the relator speaks as one admitted within the veil.

According to his usual practice of appealing to facts, as a substratum on which to build his reasoning, he produces a regular statement, in their order of succession, of the different times at which Jesus appeared after his death, authenticated by the unimpeachable evidence of the disciples themselves, by whom he was seen individually, as well as in great bodies. The evidence he corroborates by his own personal testimony at his conversion; an evidence which he produces with sentiments of the deepest self-abasement.

So important, he proceeds, was it to settle the belief of this doctrine, that if it were not true, all their hopes fell to the ground. To insist on this grand peculiarity of the Gospel, was establishing the truth of the whole by a part. It was the consummation of the validity of the mission of Christ. Without this finishing circumstance, what proof could his followers adduce, that his atonement was accepted; that his mediation was ascertained; that his intercession would be available; that his final judgment would take place; that because He was risen, they should rise also! It was not one thing, it was every thing. It was putting the seal to a testament which, without it, would not have been authentic. It involved a whole train of the most awful consequences. Such a chain of inferences would be destroyed by this broken link, as nothing could repair. In short, it amounted to this tremendous conclusion: 'Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.' You who live in the hope of the redemption wrought for you, 'are yet in your sins.' If Jesus remains under the power of death, how shall we be delivered from the power of sin? If the doctrine be false, then is my preaching a delusion, and your faith a nullity. He adds, that they who were now the happiest of men, in their assured hope of eternal life, would become, 'of all men most miserable;' in short, as in another place he asks, to what purpose has Christ died for our sins, if he has not 'risen for our justification?'

The apostle having shown himself a consummate master of the art of reasoning, by his refutation of the absurdities that would follow an assumption, that Christ was not risen; and having cleared the ground from most of the objections and difficulties which had been thrown in his way, proceeds to the positive assertion, that not only Christ is risen, but that all his faithful followers have their own resurrection ascertained by his.—He illustrates this truth by an apposite allusion to the custom of a Jewish harvest, the whole of which was sanctified by the consecration of the first-fruits.

In his distinguishing characteristics of the different properties of the body of man, in its different states of existence, every antithesis is exact. The body that is sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, is raised in incorruption, glory, and power.—The material body is become spiritual.—'The first man was made a living soul,' possessing that natural life communicated by him to all his posterity; but Christ was a quickening spirit, through whom, as from its source, spiritual life is conveyed to all believers.

If Paul uniformly makes every doctrine a fountain flowing with practical uses, it is no wonder that he should make this triumphant consummation of all doctrine subservient to the

great ends of holiness. For it is worthy of remark, that in this very place, with all the interest which his argument excites, in all the heat which his defence kindles, carried away, as he seems to be, by his faith and his feelings, —yet, in his usual manner, he checks his career to introduce moral maxims, to insinuate holy cautions. Not contented to guard the people against the danger of corrupt and corrupting society upon his own principles, he strengthens his argument by refering them to a Pagan poet, whose authority, with some at least, he might think would be more respected than his own, on the infection of 'evil communications.' He suggests ironically, as a practical effect of the disbelief of this truth, the propriety of Epicurean voluptuousness, and even ventures to recommend the utmost indulgence of a present enjoyment, upon the supposition of a death which is to cut off all future hope, and all posthumous responsibility.

Then assuming a loftier note, with an awfully warning voice, he proceeds to this solemn adjuration—'Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.' As if he had said,—If you give into this incredulity, your practice will become consonant to your belief. Every man will defend his error when it favours his vice. Your evil habits will complete the corruption of your faith. If you find an interest in indulging your mistake, your next step will be to think it true. What is first a wish, will gradually become an opinion; an opinion will as naturally become a ground of action; and what you now permit yourself to do, you will soon become willing to justify.

He produces, as the strongest proof of his belief in the doctrine in question, the complacency of Christians in suffering. Why did others press forward to martyrdom?—Why did he himself expose his life to perpetual peril? Why, but from the firm persuasion, that as Christ was risen, they should rise also. Would not their voluntary trials be absurd? Would it not be madness to embrace, when it was in their power to avoid, all the hardships which embittered life, all the dangers which were likely to shorten it. He and his colleagues were not impassable substances, but feeling men, sensible to pain, keenly alive to suffering, with nerves as finely strung, with bodies as tenderly constituted, with souls as reluctant to misery, as others. Take away this grand motive for patience, rob them of this sustaining confidence, strip them of this glorious prospect, and their zeal would lose its character of virtue, their piety its claim to wisdom. Their perseverance would be fatuity. Mighty then must be their motive, powerful indeed their assurance, clear and strong their conviction, that their brief sorrows were not worthy to be compared with the glories which were insured to them by the resurrection of Christ.

Again, he resumes the task of repelling the more plausible objections. But it is not our business to follow him through all his variety of illustration, all his diversified analogy, all his consecutive reasoning on the nature of the resurrection of the body. Resemblances the most distant, substances the most seemingly dissimilar in themselves, are yet brought together by a skill the most consummate, by an aptness the most convincing. All the objects of our senses, whatever is familiar to the sight, or habitual to the mind, are put in requisition—all the analogies of nature are ransacked—the vegetable, the animal, the terrestrial and the celestial world, are brought into comparison; and the whole is made to demonstrate the truth of this awful doctrine. Such a cluster of images, all bearing upon one point, at once fill the mind, dilate the conception, and confirm the faith.

There is singular wisdom in the selection of these illustrations, not only as being the most apposite, but the most intelligible.—They are not drawn from things abstruse or recondite, but from objects with which all classes are equally acquainted. An incidental, but not unimportant proof of the universal design of Christianity. The most ordinary man is as conversant with the springing up and growth of corn, with the distinction between the flesh of the different animal species, as the philosopher. He can also as clearly discern the exterior distinction between the different luminaries of heaven, as the astronomer Here is no demand of knowledge, no appeal to science.—Sight is the witness, sense the arbiter in this question.

To bestow immortality on mortals, and to revive the dead, had been pronounced by a heathen author to be beyond the reach of divine power. To the bold Pyrrhonists therefore, who might be among the Corinthians, and who sought to perplex the argument by asking—'how are the dead raised up?—With what body do they come?' he answers peremptorily, by refering them to the great resolver of difficultics—THE POWER OF GOD, inscribed in the book of daily experience—*God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him.* He reminds them, that this divine power they perpetually saw exercised in a wonderful manner in the revolution of seasons in the resusitation of plants apparently dead; and in the springing up of corn, which dies first, in order that it may live. To that omnipotence which could accomplish the one, could the other be difficult?

Who can pursue without emotion his rapid, yet orderly transition from one portion of his subject to another? The interest still rising till it closes in the triumphant climax of the final victory over the two last enemies, death and the grave! At length by a road, in which deviation does not impede his progress, he reaches the grand consummation. Behold I show you a mystery—we shall not all sleep—but we shall be changed—in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—at the last trumpet—for the trumpet shall sound—and the dead shall be raised incorruptible—and we shall all be changed. It is almost profane to talk of beauties, where the theme is so transcendant; but this is one of the rare instances in which amplification adds to spirit, and velocity is not retarded by repetition. The rythm adds to the effect, and soothes the mind; while the sentiment elevates it. The idea was not newly conceived in the apostle's mind; he had told the Thessalonians 'the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of an Archangel, and the trump of God.'

His grateful spirit does not forget to remind them to whom the victory is owing, to whom the thanks are due.

In the solemn close, alighting again from the world of light, and life, and glory, he just touches upon earth to drop another brief, but most impressive lesson—that though the victory is obtained, though the last conquest is achieved, though Christ is actually risen—all these ends accomplished, are not to dismiss us from diligence, but to stimulate us to it. They furnish only an additional argument for abounding in the work of the Lord.' It adds animation to the motive, that from this full exposition of the doctrine, they not only *believe*, but they *know*, that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

With this glorious hope what should arrest their progress? With such a reward in view—eternal life, the purchase of their risen Saviour, he at once provides them with the most effectual spur to diligence, with the only powerful support under the sorrows of life, with the only infallible antidote against the fear of death.

To conclude, this blessed apostle never fails, where the subject is susceptible of consolation as well as of instruction, to deduce both from the same premises. What affectionate Christian will not here revert, with grateful joy, to the same writer's cheering address to the saints of another church, who might labour under the pressing affliction of the death of pious friends?* He there offers a new instance, not only of his never-failing rule of applying the truth he preaches, but of their immediate application to the feelings of the individual. This it is which renders his writings so personally interesting. That the mourner over the pious dead might not 'sorrow as those who have no hope,' after the declaration that 'Jesus died and rose again.' He builds on this general principle, the particular assurance, 'Even them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.'

What a balm to the breaking heart!—What! the loved companion of our youth, the friend of our age, the solace of our life, with whom we took sweet counsel, with whom we went to the house of God as friends, will Christ bring with him? Shall the bliss of our suspended intercourse be restored, unalloyed by the mutual infirmities which here rendered it imperfect, undiminished by the dread of another separation?

Well then might the angel say to Mary at the forsaken tomb, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' Well might Jesus himself repeat the question, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' Tears are wiped from all eyes. 'The voice of joy and thanksgiving is in the tabernacles of the righteous.' 'The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.' The resurrection of Christians is indissolubly involved in that of Christ: 'because I live, ye shall live also.'—What are the splendid triumphs of earthly heroes, to his triumph over the grave? What is the most signal victory over a world of enemies, to his victory over his last enemy? 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

* 1 Thessalonians, iv. 14.

CHAP. XIX.

Saint Paul on Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Religious Joy.

Prayer is an act which seems to be so prepared in the frame of our nature; to be so congenial to our dependent condition, so suited to our exigencies, so adapted to every man's known wants, and to his possibilities of wants unknown; so full of relief to the soul, and of peace to the mind, and of gladness to the heart; so productive of confidence in God, and so reciprocally proceeding from that confidence, that we should think, if we did not know the contrary, that it is a duty which scarcely required to be enjoined, that he who had once found out his necessities, and that there was no other redress for them, would spontaneously have recourse as a delight, to what he had neglected as a command; that he who had once tasted the bounties of God would think it a hardship not to be allowed to thank him for them; that the invitation to pray to his Benefactor, was an additional proof of Divine goodness; that to be allowed to praise him for his mercies, was itself a mercy.

The apostle's precept, 'pray always,'—pray evermore, pray without ceasing, men ought always to pray,—will not be criticised as a pleonasm, if we call to remembrance that there is no state of mind, no condition of life, in which prayer is not a necessity as well as an obligation. In danger, fear impels to it; in trouble, we have no other resource; in sickness, we have no other refuge; in dejection, no other hope; in death, no other comfort.

Saint Paul frequently shows the word *prayer* to be a term of great latitude, involving the whole compass of our intercourse with God. He represents it to include our adoration of his perfections, our acknowledgment of the wisdom of his dispensations, of our obligation for his benefits, providential and spiritual; of the avowal of our entire dependance on him, of our absolute subjection to him, the declaration of our faith in him, the expression of our devotedness to him; the confession of our own unworthiness, infirmities, and sins; the petition for the supply of our wants, and for the pardon of our offences; for succour in our distress; for a blessing on our undertakings; for the direction of our conduct, and the success of our affairs.

If any should be disposed to think this general view too comprehensive, let him point out which of these particulars prayer does not embrace; which of these clauses, a rational, a sentient, an enlightened, a dependent being can omit in his scheme of devotion.

But as the multifarious concerns of human life will necessarily occasion a suspension of the exercise; Saint Paul, ever attentive to the principle of the act, and to the circumstances of the actor, reduces all these qualities to their essence, when he resolves them into the *spirit* of supplication.

To pray incessantly, therefore, appears to be, in his view of the subject, to keep the mind in an habitual disposition and propensity to devotion; for there is a sense in which we may be said to *do* that which we are *willing* to do,

though there are intervals of thought, as well as intermissions of the act.—'As a traveller,' says Dr. Barrow, 'may be said to be still on his journey, though he stops to take needful rest, and to transact necessary business.' If he pause, he does not turn out of the way; his pursuit is not diverted, though occasionally interrupted.

Constantly maintaining the disposition, then, and never neglecting the actual duty; never slighting the occasion which presents itself, nor violating the habit of stated devotion, may, we presume, be called 'to pray without ceasing.' The expression 'watching unto prayer,' implies this vigilance in finding, and this zeal in laying hold on these occasions.

The success of prayer, though promised to all, who offer it in perfect sincerity, is not so frequently promised to the cry of distress, to the impulse of fear, or the emergency of the moment, as to humble continuance in devotion. It is to patient waiting, to assiduous solicitation, to unwearied importunity, that God has declared that he will lend his ear, that he will give the communication of his Spirit, that he will grant the return of our requests. Nothing but this holy perseverance can keep up in our minds an humble sense of our dependence. It is not by a mere casual petition, however passionate, but by habitual application, that devout affections are excited and maintained; that our converse with heaven is carried on. It is by no other means that we can be assured, with Saint Paul, that 'we are risen with Christ,' but this obvious one, that we thus seek the things which are above; that the heart is renovated; that the mind is lifted above this low scene of things; that the spirit breathes in a purer atmosphere; that the whole man is enlightened, and strengthened, and purified; and that the more frequently, so the more nearly, he approaches to the throne of God. He will find also, that prayer not only expresses, but elicits the Divine grace.

Yet do we not allow every idle plea, every frivolous pretence, to divert us from our better resolves? Business brings in its grave apology; pleasure its bewitching excuse. But if we would examine our hearts truly, and report them faithfully, we should find the fact to be, that disinclination to this employment, oftener than our engagement in any other, keeps us from this sacred intercourse with our Maker.

Under circumstances of distress, indeed, prayer is adopted with comparatively little reluctance: the mind, which knows not where to fly, flies to God. In agony, nature is no atheist. The soul is drawn to God by a sort of natural impulse; not always, perhaps by an emotion of piety; but from a feeling conviction, that every other refuge is 'a refuge of lies.' Oh! thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, happy if thou art either drawn or driven, with holy David, to say to thy God, 'Thou art a place to hide me in.'

But if it is easy for the sorrowing heart to give up a world, by whom itself seems to be given up, there are other demands for prayer equally imperative. There are circumstances more dangerous, yet less suspected of danger, in which, though the call is louder, it is less heard; because the voice of conscience is drowned by the clamours of the world. Prosperous fortunes, unbroken health, flattering friends, buoyant spirits, a spring-tide of success—these are the occasions when the very abundance of God's mercies is apt to fill the heart till it hardens it. Loaded with riches, crowned with dignities, successful in enterprise; beset with snares in the shape of honours, with perils under the mask of pleasures; then it is, that to the already saturated heart, 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant,' is more in unison than 'what shall I render to the Lord?'

Men of business, especially men in power and public situations, are in no little danger of persuading themselves, that the affairs which occupy their time and mind, being, as they really are, great and important duties, exonerate those who perform them from the necessity of the same strictness in devotion, which they allow to be right for men of leisure; and which, when they become men of leisure themselves, they are resolved to adopt;—but now is the accepted time, here is the accepted place, however they may be tempted to think that an exact attention to public duty, and an unimpeachable rectitude in discharging it, is itself a substitute for the offices of piety.

But these great and honourable persons are the very men to whom superior cares, and loftier duties, and higher responsibilities, render prayer even more necessary, were it possible, than to others. Nor does this duty trench upon other duties, for the compatibilities of prayer are universal. It is an exercise which has the property of incorporating itself with every other; not only not impeding, but advancing it. If secular thoughts, and vain imaginations, often break in on our devout employments, let us allow religion to vindicate her rights, by uniting herself with our worldly occupations. There is no crevice so small at which devotion may not slip in: no other instance of so rich a blessing being annexed to so easy a condition; no other case in which there is any certainty, that to ask is to have. This the suitors to the great do not always find so easy from them, as the great themselves find from God.

Not only the elevation on which they stand makes this fence necessary for their personal security, by enabling them to bear the height without giddiness, but the guidance of God's hand is so essential to the operations they conduct, that the public prosperity, no less than their own safety, is involved in the practice of habitual prayer. God will be more likely to bless the hand which steers, and the head which directs, when both are ruled by the heart which prays. Happily we need not look out of our own age or nation for instances of public men, who, while they govern the country, are themselves governed by a religious principle: who petition the Almighty for direction, and praise him for success.

The duty which Paul enjoins—'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereto with all perseverance,'—would be the surest means to augment our love to God. We gradually cease to love a benefactor of whom we cease to think. The frequent recollection would warm our affections,

and we should more cordially devote our lives to him to whom we should more frequently consecrate our hearts. The apostle therefore inculcates prayer, not only as an act, but as a frame of mind.

In all his writings effectual prayer uniformly supposes accompanying preparatory virtue. Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws Charity, followed by her lovely train—of forbearance with faults; forgiveness of injuries, pity for errors, and relieving of wants. It draws repentance, with her holy sorrows, her pious resolutions, her self-distrust. It attracts Faith, with her elevated eye—Hope, with her grasped anchor—Beneficence, with her open hand—Zeal, looking far and wide to serve—Humility, with introverted eye, looking at home. Prayer, by quickening these graces in the heart, warms them into life, fits them for service, and dismisses each to its appropriate practice. Prayer is mental virtue; virtue is spiritual action. The mould into which genuine prayer casts the soul, is not effaced by the suspension of the act, but retains some touches of the impression till the act is repeated.

Prayer, divested of the love of God, will obtain nothing, because it asks nothing cordially. It is only the interior sentiment that gives life and spirit to devotion. To those who possess this, prayer is not only a support, but a solace: to those who want it, it is not only an insipid task, but a religious penalty. Our apostle every where shows that purity of heart, resignation of spirit, peace and joy in believing, can by no other expedient, be maintained in life, activity, and vigour.—Prayer so circumstanced is the appointed means for drawing down the blessing we solicit, and the pardon we need.

Yet that the best things are liable to abuse is a complaint echoed by all writers of ethics. Certain mystics, pretending to extraordinary illumination, have converted this holy exercise into a presumptuous error. Intense meditation itself has been turned into an instrument of spiritual pride, and led the mistaken recluse to overlook the appointed means of instruction; to reject the scriptures, to abandon the service of the sanctuary, and to expect to be snatched, like holy Paul, up to the third heaven, deserting those prescribed and legitimate methods which would more surely have conducted him thither. The history of the apostle himself presents a striking lesson in this case. 'Let us remember,' says one of the fathers, 'that though Paul was miraculously converted by an immediate vision from heaven, he was nevertheless sent for baptism and instruction to a man.'

Holy Paul calls upon us to meditate on the multitude and the magnitude of the gifts of God. When we consider how profusely he bestows, and how little he requires; that while he confers like Deity, he desires only such poor returns as can be made by indigent, mendicant mortality; that he requires no costly oblation; nothing that will impoverish, but, on the contrary, will inconceivably enrich the giver. When we consider this, we are ready to wonder that he will accept so poor a thing as impotent gratitude for immeasurable bounty. When we reflect, that our very desire to praise him is his gift—that his grace must purify the offering, before he condescends to receive it, must confer on it that spirit which renders it acceptable—that he only expects we should consecrate to Him, what we have received from him—that we should only confess, that of all we enjoy, nothing is our due—we may well blush at our insensibility.

We think, perhaps, as we have observed in another place, had he commanded us 'to do some great thing,' to raise some monument of splendor, some memorial of notoriety and ostentation, something that would perpetuate our own name with his goodness, we should gladly have done it. How much more when He only requires,

Our thanks how due!

When he only asks the homage of the heart, the expression of our dependence, the recognition of his right!

Concerning the duty of intercessory prayer for those we love, the apostle hath bequeathed us a high and holy example. He has given us not only injunctions, but specimens. Observe for what it is that 'he bows his knees to God' in behalf of his friends. Is it for an increase of their wealth, their power, their fame, or any other external prosperity? No: it is that 'God would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man:'—it is that 'Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith;'—it is 'that they may be rooted and grounded in love,' and this to a glorious end—'that they may be able, with all saints, to comprehend' the vast dimensions of the love of Christ;—that 'they may be filled with all the fulness of God.' These are the sort of petitions which we need never hesitate to present. These are the requests which we may rest assured are always agreeable to the divine will; here we are certain we cannot 'pray amiss.' These are intercessions of which the benefit may be felt, when wealth, and fame, and power shall be forgotten things.

Why does Paul 'pray day and night that he might see the face of his Thessalonian converts?' Not merely that he might have the gratification of once more beholding those he loved—though that would sensibly delight so affectionate a heart—but 'that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith.'

Here is an instance of a spirit so large in its affections, so high in their object; of a man who had so much of Heaven in his friendships, so much of soul in his attachments, that he thought time too brief, earth too scanty, worldly blessings too low, to enter deeply into his petitions for those to whom time and earth, the transitory blessings of life, and life itself, would so soon be no more.

In exciting us to perpetual gratitude, Saint Paul stirs us up to the duty of keeping before our eyes the mercies which so peremptorily demand it. These mercies succeed each other so rapidly, or rather, are crowded upon us so simultaneously, that if we do not count them as they are received, and record them as they are enjoyed, their very multitude which ought to penetrate the heart more deeply, will cause them to slip out of the memory.

The apostle acknowledges the gratitude due to God to arise from his being the universal proprietor,—*whose I am, and whom I serve;* thus making the obedience to grow out of the dependence. He serves his Maker because he is his property. We should reflect on the superiority of the bounties of our heavenly Father, over those of our earthly friends, not only in their number and quality, but especially in their unremitting constancy. The dearest friends only think of us occasionally, nor can we be so unreasonable as to expect to be the constant object of their attention. If they assist us under the immediate pressure of distress, their cares are afterwards remitted.

Many, besides us, have a claim upon their kindness, and they could not invariably attend to us without being unjust to others. If a man were to lay out his whole stock of affection upon one individual, how many duties must he neglect, how many claims must he slight, how much injustice must he commit, of how much ingratitude would he be guilty! And as an earthly friend cannot divide his benefits, or even the common acts of kindness among an indefinite number, and as human means have limits, so his benevolence can generally be little more than good will. But the exhaustless fund of infinite love can never be diminished;—though the distribution is universal, though the diffusion is as wide as his rational creation, though the continuance is as durable as his own eternity, the beneficence of almighty power needs not, like his creatures, deduct from one because it is liberal to another.

Our kindest friend may not always know our secret sorrows, and with the utmost goodness of intention cannot apply a balsam, where he does not know there is a wound; or it may be a wound deeper than human skill can reach, or human kindness cure. Again, our weaknesses may often weary, and sometimes disgust, even an attached friend; but it is the feeling of these very infirmities with which our divine High Priest is so tenderly touched. His compassion arises from a deep and intimate sense of sympathy—for he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet in no point did he sin.

It is in this view that we become so personally interested in the attributes of God; that they come in so completely in aid of our necessities, and to the supply of our comforts. As his omniscience brings him fully acquainted with all our wants, and his omnipotence enables him to relieve them; so his immortality is pledged for our's, and ensures to us the perpetuity of our blessings. What a glorious idea, that the attributes of the self-dependent and everlasting God are laid out in the service of his children!

But the apostle, not contented with the double injunctions,—*pray ever more; in every thing give thanks*—links to it a most exhilirating duty —*rejoice for ever more.* This single exhortation—*rejoice in the Lord*—is not sufficient, it is reiterated without limit, *again I say rejoice!* But what are the chief causes of Paul's joy?—'that God hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,'—'that he hath delivered us from the powers of darkness,'—'that he hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son'—that we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' What is 'his hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing!—that he should meet his converts in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

But this blessed saint found surprising subjects of joy, subjects with which a stranger does not desire to intermeddle. *To rejoice in tribulation; to take joyfully the spoiling of his goods; to rejoice in the sufferings of his friends; to rejoice that he was counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ.* This is, indeed, a species of joy which the world does not desire to take from him, nor to share with him. In the close of the description of his way of life, of which temptation, and trial, and sorrow, and sufferings, are the gradations, the climax is commonly not merely resignation, but triumph: not submission only, but joy.

It is worth our observation, that by perseverance in prayer he was enabled to glory in the infirmity which he had thrice besought the Lord might depart from him. And it is a most impressive part of his character, that he never gloried in 'those visions and revelations of the Lord,' but in the infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions for Christ's sake, which were graciously sent to counteract any elation of heart, which such extraordinary distinctions might have occasioned. Like his blessed Lord, he disclosed all the circumstances of his degradation to the eye of the world, and concealed only those of his glory.

The same spirit of Christian generosity which directed his petitions, influenced also his thanksgivings for his friends. What are the subjects for which he praises God on their behalf?—not that they are enriched or exalted, but 'that their faith groweth exceedingly.' Again to the Philippians, 'holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

But the apostle endeavours most especially to kindle our grateful joy for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; a blessing which, though thrown open to the acceptance of all on the offered terms, is to every believer distinctly personal. He endeavours to excite our praises for every instance of faith and holiness recorded in Scripture. He teaches, us that whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our instruction. The humble believer may claim his share—for in this case appropriation is not monopoly—of every doctrine, of every precept, of every promise, of every example. The Christian may exultingly say, the Holy Scriptures were written for *my* reproof, for *my* correction, for *my* instruction in righteousness. The Holy Spirit, who teaches me to apply it to myself, dictated it for *me*. Not a miracle upon record, not an instance of trust in God, not a pattern of obedience to Him, not a gratulation of David, not a prophecy of Isaiah, not an office of Christ, not a doctrine of an Evangelist, not an exhortation of an apostle, not a consolation of Saint Paul, but has its immediate application to *my* wants; but makes a distinct call on *my* gratitude; but furnishes a personal demand upon my

responsibility. The whole record of the sacred Canon is but a record of the special mercies of God to me, and of his promises to myself, and to every individual Christian to the end of the world.

That Divine Spirit, which dictated the inspired Volume, has taken care that we should never be at a loss for materials for devotion. Not a prophet or apostle but has more or less contributed to the sacred fund, but has cast his mite into the treasury. The writings of Saint Paul, especially, are rich in petitions, abundant in thanksgivings, overflowing in praises. The Psalms of David have enlarged the medium of intercourse between earth and heaven. They have supplied to all ages materials for Christian worship, under every supposeable circumstance of human life. They have facilitated the means of negociation for the penitent, and of gratitude for the pardoned. They have provided confession for the contrite, consolation for the broken hearted, invitation to the weary, and rest for the heavy laden. They have furnished petitions for the needy, praise for the grateful, and adoration for all. However indigent in himself, no one can complain of want who has access to such a magazine of intellectual and spiritual treasure. These variously gifted compositions, not only kindle the devoutest feeling, but suggest the aptest expressions: they invest the sublimest meanings with the noblest eloquence. They have taught the tongue of the stammerer to speak plainly; they have furnished him who was ready to perish for the lack of knowledge, with principles as well as feelings; they have provided the illiterate with the form, and the devout with the spirit of prayer. To him who previously felt not his wants, they have imparted fervent desires, they have inspired the faint with energy, and the naturally dead, with spiritual life.

The writings and the practice of Saint Paul do not less abundantly, than the compositions of David, manifest the supreme power of fervent devotion. The whole tenor of his life proves that his heart was habitually engaged in intercourse with the Father of spirits. His conversation, like the face of Moses, betrays, by its brightness, that he had familiar admission to the presence of God. He exhibits the noblest instance, with which the world has presented us, of this peculiar effect of vital religion: that supplication is the dialect of the poor in spirit, thanksgiving the idiom of the genuine Christian, praise his vernacular tongue.

CHAP. XX.

Saint Paul an Example to Familiar Life.

The highest state of moral goodness is compounded of the avowed properties of ripened habits, growing out of genuine Christian principles, invigorated and confirmed by the energy of the Holy Spirit:—this is evangelical virtue.

Saint Paul contrasts the power of opposite habits with wonderful force in his two pictures, one of the debasing slavery of a vicious mind, and the other of the almost mechanical power of superinduced good habits in a virtuous one —'*Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*'* What a dominion must holy principles and holy habits have obtained in that mind, when he could say, '*The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,*'—'*I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me!*' Mere morality never rose to this superhuman triumph, never exhibited such a proof of its own power to establish Christian practice. To these rooted habits the sacred writers sometimes apply the term perfection.

Saint Paul, when he speaks of perfection, could only mean that fixedness of principle, and Christian elevation of character, which, under the influence of Divine grace, is actually attainable; he could not mean to intimate that he expected man to be freed from liability to error, to be completely exempted from the inroads of passion, to be no longer obnoxious to deviations and deflections from the law, by which he is yet mainly guided and governed. He could not expect him to be entirely and absolutely delivered from the infirmities of his frail and fallen nature. But though this general uniformity of good habits may occasionally, through the surprise of passion and the assaults of temptation, be in some degree broken, yet these invaders are not encouraged, but repelled: though some actions may be more imperfect, and some wrong tempers may still unhappily intrude themselves, yet vigilance and prayer obtain such a power of resistance, as finally almost to subdue these corruptions; and those that are not altogether conquered, but occasionally break out, induce a habit of watchfulness over the suspected places, and keep the heart humble, by a feeling of these remains of infirmity.

But even here, such are the stratagems of the human heart for concealing its corruptions, not only from others, but from itself, that it is incumbent on every individual so to examine, as clearly to discover, his own real character; to inquire, whether he is at the same time sincerely mourning over his remaining disorders, and earnestly desiring and diligently cultivating a new vital principle of faith and holiness; or whether he has only been making a certain degree of improvement in this or that particular quality, while he continues both destitute and undesirous of this vital principle, which is the first seed of the Divine Life.

It should seem, that the term 'perfect,' as well in other parts of Scripture as in the writings of St. Paul, not only has not always the exact meaning which we assign to it, but has different meanings, according to the occasion on which it is employed. Sometimes this term expresses the aim rather than the acquisition, as in that injunction of our Saviour—'Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.' Sometimes it appears to imply, being furnished with needful instruction in all points, as in Paul's direction to Timothy,—'that the man of God may

* Romans, ch. vi

be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' Often it means nearly the same with religious sincerity, as in Proverbs,—'for the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.' Sometimes it is used with a special reference to abhorrence of idolatry, as when the expression 'perfect heart' is applied to various kings of Judah. The meaning in Philippians, 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded,' seems to import only real earnestness. Perfection, in the precise notion of it, admits not of gradation, nor of advancement in the same quality.

The highest kind of perfection of which man is capable, is to 'love God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, with all his heart;' that is, so to love as to obey the laws of the one, while he rests on the merits of the other. Paul intimates that our happiness consists in the pardon of our sins, and our holiness in our conquest over them; and perhaps there is not a more dangerous delusion, than to separate the forgiveness from the subjugation: the pardon, indeed, is absolute, the conquest comparative. He places attainable perfection in the obedience of faith, in the labours of charity, in the purity of holiness; proving that to aspire after this perfection, all men, according to their respective advantages, are under equal obligation; and it is not too much to assert, that no one lives up to the dignity of man, who does not habitually aspire to the perfection of a Christian. For to come as near to God, that is, as near to perfection as our nature was intended to approach, is but to answer the end for which we were sent into the world.—And do we not defeat that end, while we are not only contented to live so much below our acknowledged standard, but while we rest satisfied, without even aspiring towards it?

While Paul strenuously endeavours to abate confidence, and beat down presumption he is equally careful, not by lowering the tone of perfection, to foster negligence, or to cherish indolence. He speaks as one who knew that sloth is an enemy, the more dangerous for being insidiously quiet. It saps the principle as effectually, if not as expeditiously, as other vices storm it. It is, indeed, in the power of this one inert sin, to perform the worst work of all the active ones—to destroy the soul. He admonishes us equally, by his writings and by his example, to carry all the liveliness of our feelings, and the vigour of our faculties, into our religion. He knew that a cold indifference, that a lifeless profession, would ill prepare us for that vital world, that real land of the living, that immortality which is all life, and soul, and spirit. He therefore prescribes for us patients who need to be stimulated, full as often as to be lowered, in our moral temperature; nay, whose *general* constitution of mind presents a large portion of languor to be invigorated, and of lethargy to be animated. 'A physician,' says bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'would have small employment on the Riphæan mountains, if he could cure nothing but calentures; dead palsies and consumptions are *their* diseases.

The apostle, however, intimates frequently that perfection does not consist in a higher heroic elevation in some particular point, which, as few could reach, so fewer would aim at it; but in a steady principle, an equable piety, a consistent practice, an unremitting progress. If the standard held up were singular, it would be unprofitable. An exhibition of character rather to be wondered at, than imitated, would be a useless perfection. A prodigy is not a model. It would be no duty to copy a miracle, but presumptuous to expect that a miracle would be wrought for us. To call on *all* to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God'—to exhort men to 'go unto perfection,' would be mocking human infirmity, if the apostle meant something which only a very few could attain.—'Pressing on unto perfection,' can mean little more than a perpetual improvement in piety and virtue.

Let us then be animated and encouraged by Scripture instances of excellence, and not deterred by them, as if they were too sublime for our imitation, as if exalted piety were to be limited to a few peculiar favourites of Heaven, were the exclusive prerogative of some distinguished servants of God, the rare effect of some miraculous gift. All grace is indeed a miracle, but it is not a singular, it is not an exclusive miracle. Whole churches, with exceptions no doubt, have been favoured with it. Saint Paul speaks of large communities, not universally, we presume, but generally, touched by divine grace, so as collectively to become 'the joy and crown of his rejoicing.' Hear him declare of his Roman converts, that they 'were full of all goodness, filled with all knowledge;' of the Corinthians—that they 'were enriched in every thing—that they abounded in all *faith* and *diligence:*' mark the connexion of these two attributes, 'faith' in one, nor in another, is not the slackener of duty, but in *all* the principle and spring of the same 'diligence.' These high commendations are not limited to Apollos, his associate in the ministry, nor to 'Timothy, his dearly beloved son;' nor to Titus, his 'own son after the common faith,' nor to any other of those distinguished saints 'who laboured with him in the Gospel.'

We may therefore fairly consider Saint Paul, not as an instructor nor as a model, exclusively for martyrs, and ministers, and missionaries. As the instruction of Christ's sermon on the mount, though primarily addressed to his disciples, was by no means restricted to them; so the exhortations of Paul are not confined to ecclesiastical teachers, though he had them much in view. The inclosure lies open to all; the entrance is left free; the possibility of salvation is universal, the invitation is as large as the benevolence of God, the persons invited as numerous as his whole rational creation.

It is a beautiful part of his character, and it is what contributes to make him so uniformly a pattern, that all his strength is not reserved for, nor expended entirely on, those great demands which so frequently occurred, to answer which he was always so fully prepared, and which he encountered with such unshaken fortitude.

His intervals were filled up with shades of the same colour: the same principle was set at work in all the common events of his daily life: the same dispositions which were ripening him for his final suffering, operated in the humble, ten-

der, forbearing habits, in which he was perpetually exercised. The Divine principle had resolved itself into a settled frame of mind. And it was in the hourly cultivation of that most amiable branch of it, Christian charity, that he acquired such maturity in the heroic virtue of enduring patience. To deny his own inclination to sustain the infirmities of the weak, to bear the burden of others, he considered, as indispensable in the followers of *Him*, whose lovely characteristic it was, that HE PLEASED NOT HIMSELF. In enjoining this temper on his Roman converts, he winds up his injunction, with ascribing to the Almighty the two attributes which rendor Him the fountain of grace, for the production of this very temper in all alike who call upon Him for it. He denominates Him *the God of patience and consolation.*

We must not therefore fancy that this eminent saint was not an example to private life, because his destination was higher, and his trials greater than ours. This superiority cannot disqualify him for a copy. We must aim at the highest point. It is easier to reduce a portrait than enlarge it. All *may* have the same grace; and some actually *have* great, if not equal trials. If Christians are not now called like him, to martyrdom, they are frequently called to bear the long protracted sufferings of sickness without mitigation, of penury without relief, of sorrows without redress. Some are called to bear them all, without even the comfort of witnesses, without the soothing of pity.

If the elevation of his conduct does not place this great apostle above our imitation, no more does the sublimity of his principles, as we find them exhibited in his writings. His piety in both is equally of a practical nature. We rise from perusing many a treatiso of metaphysical morality, without clearly ascertaining its precise object; at least, without carrying away any one specific principle for the regulation of our own heart and life. We admire the ingenuity of the work, as we admire the contrivance of a labyrinth; it is curiously devised; but its intricacy, while it has amused, has embarrassed us. Wo feel that we might have made our way, and attained our ond, more easily and more speedily, in a plain path, where less perplexity required no artificial clue. The direct morality of our apostle has none of this *Dædalian enginery.*

Saint Paul, in one sense, always writes like a man of the actual world. His is not a religion of theory, but of facts, of feelings, of principlos; a religion exactly accommodated to the being for whom ho prescribes. Our passions and our reason, our hopes and our fears, our infirmities and our supports, our lapse and our restoration, all find their placo in his discussions. Hc consults every part of our nature; he writes for matorial and immatcrial, for mortal and immortal man.

Ho docs not abound in those desultory and random discussions, which distract thc mind, and leavc the reader at a loss what ho is to think and what he is to do. He does not philosophize upon abstract truths, nor roason upon conjectural notions; but bears witncss to what ho has seen and known, and deduces practical instruction from actual events. He is therefore distinct in his exposition of doctrines and dutics; explicit in his injunctions and reproofs; and this becausc truth is absolute. We can scarcely peruse a sentence in his writings, without finding something to bring away from them for our own use, something which belongs to ourselves, something which would have been seasonably addressed to us, had he been our personal correspondent.

He knew mankind too well, not to know the necessity of speaking out: he knew, that if any opening was left, they would interpret it in their own favour; that they would slip out of every thing which was not precisely explained and definitely enjoincd. He was aware that the reason why men profit so little by scripture instruction is because, in applying it, they are disposed to think only of other people, and are apt to forget themselves. He knew it was not easy to lower the world's good opinion of itself. That the quicksightedness of certain persons, errs, not in misunderstanding the justness of a reproof, but only in mistaking its object; and that, by directing the censure to others, they turn away the point of the weapon from their own bosoms. Yet he makes charitable allowance for the capacities, the exigencies, and the temptations of a world so diversely circumstanced. Like his blessed Master, he would have all men every where to be saved; and, like him, left no means unessayed, which might promote this great end.

We must not imagine that Christianity is not precisely the same thing now, as it was when our Apostle published it, because its external marks are not so completely identified. A more animated zeal in religion might have been visible and legitimate in thc first ages of the Church, than commonly in the present. The astonishing change then effected in the minds of men, was rapid, and often instantaneous. In our day, it is usually gradual. It is no wonder that persons should have been overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, at being suddenly rescued from the darkness of Pagan idolatry, a being delivered from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and trauslated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The total revolution in tho mind, and in the principles, would certainly produce a sensible alteration in the external habits and visible practice of the Gentile convert; whose morals, if he were indeed a convert, would be as different from what they had previously been, as his faith; and he as different from his former self, as any two men from each other. This, consequently, would make the change more obvious than in the renovated character of a nominal Christian, now brought to embrace vital Christianity; in whose outward observances, antecedent and subsequent to his change, there might probably be no *very* apparent alteration.

In tho days of the apostle, the holy sacrament of baptism was likely to be, in the very highest sense of the word, regenoration. It was not only the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual graco; but it was also, for the most part, an actual evidence that such grace had been effectually received unto eternal salvation. Tho convert then was an adult, and received baptism as his explicit confession and

open adoption of the new faith. To bring men 'to believe with the heart, and to confess with the tongue,' the Divinity of the Redeemer, was to bring them to be truly converted. 'No man could say that Jesus was the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' As the Apostles had neither reputation to influence, nor authority to compel, nor riches to bribe, so it is obvious that there was nothing to attract men to Christianity, except their full conviction of its divine truth. It was hostile to their secular advancement, to their interests, their reputation, their safety. Hypocrisy was consequently a rare, when it was a losing sin. A hypocrite was not likely to embrace a faith by which he was sure to gain nothing in this world, if it were false; and nothing till after his death, if it were true. Christians were such optionally, or not at all.

It was not then probable, that he who was baptized under such circumstances, would be merely an external convert. According to all human means of judging, that 'faith' existed, which is said by an article to be 'confirmed' in baptism; and this holy Sacrament became not only an initiatory, but a confirmatory rite.

There were at that time no hereditary professors; there was no such thing as Christianity by transmission. There was therefore a broad line to step over, whenever the new faith was adopted. There was no gradual introduction into it by education, no slipping into it by habit, no wearing its badge by fashion.

But if the novelty attending the early introduction to Christianity has ceased; if living in a land where it is universally professed, being educated in some acquaintance with the Christian faith, finding easy access into the Temples in which it is preached, habitually attending on its services, living under laws which are imbued with its spirit; if all this takes off the apparent effect, if it lessens the surprise, if it moderates the joy and wonder, which a total change in external circumstances was calculated to excite; if it even lessens in a degree the *visible* alteration produced in hearts awakened by it; if this change was more obvious in the conversion of those who were before wallowing in the grossest abominations, or sunk in the most degrading superstitions, than in those who are conversant with the decencies of life, who had previously observed the forms of religion, and practised many of the social virtues; yet, in the views and in the feelings, in the heart and in the spirit, in the principle of the mind, and in the motive of the conduct, the change in the one case has a very near affinity to the change in the other. The difference of circumstances diminishes nothing of the real power of Divine grace; it does not alter the nature of the change inwardly effected; it does not manifest now, less than it did then, the pitifulness of God's great mercy in delivering, those who are tied and bound with the chain of their sins.

Had Saint Paul been a profligate or immoral man, we apprehend that his conversion would, as an example have lost much of its power. The two extremes of character might in that case, indeed, more forcibly strike the superficial inquirer. But to show the turpitude of gross vice, a miracle is not necessary; Christianity is not necessary. The thing was self-evident; Antoninus and Epictetus could have shown it. But for a man who had previously such strong claims to respect from others, such pretensions on which to value himself,—his Hebrew descent; his early initiation into the distinguishing Jewish rite; his Pharisaic exactness, an exactness not hypocritical, but conscientious; his unquestionable morals, his blameless righteousness in all that pertained to the law, his correctness of demeanour, his strict observance of religious forms; that *such* a man should need the further subjugation of his passions, his pride, his bigotry, and uncharitableness; that, in short, *he* should require a total and radical renovation of the character and of the soul,—this was indeed a wonder worthy of Divine inspiration to declare, as well as of Divine grace to accomplish; and this change, when really effected, afforded an appeal for the truth of the doctrine, both to the heart and to the understanding, more powerful than volumes of arguments.

Saint Paul was aware, that there is frequently more danger where there is less scandal; that some fancy they are reformed, because they have exchanged the sensual for the spiritual vices; that in truth, men oftener change their sins than their nature, put pride into their correctness, and violence into their zeal, and uncharitableness into their sobriety, and covetousness into their prudence, and censoriousness into their abstinence. Among the better disposed, he knew there were many who, after they are brought to embrace religion, think they have nothing more to do. They were, perhaps, sincere in their inquiries, and their convictions were strong. But having once obtained a confidence in their acceptance, they conclude that all is well. They live upon their capital, if we may be allowed the expression; and so depend upon their assurance, as if their personal work was done. To both of these classes he directs the warning voice, *Go on unto perfection.* To both he virtually represents, that if the transformation were real, it would animate them to increased earnestness; while their desires would be more fervent, their piety would not evaporate in desires, their constant fear of relaxing would quicken their progress.

It is worth remarking, that throughout the Holy Scriptures, and especially throughout the writings of the Apostle—*striving with principalities and power, putting on the whole armour of God, continuing instant in prayer, seeking those things which are above, mortifying your members, avoiding inordinate affections and covetousness, which is idolatry,* are not applied to the profane, or even to the careless, but to those who had made a great proficiency in religion; not to novices, but to saints. These are continually cautioned against sitting down at ease in their religious possessions; they are exhorted, on the contrary, to augment them. It is not, as an able writer says, 'longing after great discoveries, nor after great tastes of the love of God, nor longing to be in Heaven, nor longing to die, that are such distinguishing marks of a perfect Christian, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.'*

* Dr. Owen on the Holy Spirit

The apostle shows that we must not sit down satisfied even in the habitual *desire*, even in the general *tendency* to what is right. He frequently stirs up the reader to actual exercise, to quickening exertions: without such movements, he knew that desire might sink into unproductive wishes; that good tendencies might come short of their aim. This brief, but comprehensive hint—*not as though I had already attained*—frequently recollected and acted upon, will serve to keep up in the mind, that we are capable of much higher things than we have yet achieved—and that, while we are diligently ascending by each progressive step, we must still stretch forward our view to the culminating point.

If, then, even the most conspicuous converts of Saint Paul required to be confirmed by incessant admonition; if he did not think the most heroic Christians so established as to be arrived at their ultimate state; if he did not think the most advanced so secure as to be trusted to go alone, so complete in themselves as to lose sight of their dependence; if *they* required to be exhorted *to go on unto perfection; to be renewed from day to day; to stand fast; to quit themselves like men; to be strong in the Lord*, and in the power of his might *to stand against the wiles of the Devil; and having done all, to stand*—'Let us not be high minded, but fear.' If we believe that the Spirit was poured out in more abundant measures in the incipient state, than on us in the more established position of the Church; yet we see their superiority, in this respect, neither lessened the necessity of caution in the instructor, nor of diligence in the hearer.

CHAP. XXI.

On the superior advantages of the present period, for the attainment of Knowledge, Religion, and Happiness.

We have heard of a Royal infidel, who was impious enough to declare, that had the Maker of the universe consulted him at the Creation, he could have given him hints for the improvement of his plan. Many, who do not go so far as to regret that their advice was not asked when the world was made, practically intimate that they could improve upon the scheme of Providence in carrying it on. We have met with persons, who, not fully satisfied with the evidences of Christianity, at least not quite firm in the practical adoption of its truths, have expressed a wish, that for the more complete confirmation of their faith, their lot had been cast in this, or in that particular age, in which they might have cleared up their doubts, and removed their difficulties.

Now, though it is not permitted to indulge any wish contrary to the appointment of Him who fixes the bounds of our habitation, and ordains our whole lot in life; yet it should seem that we, in this age and country, have the most abundant reason, not only to be peculiarly grateful that it has fallen at this precise period. Who, that reflects at all will maintain, that any æra in the history of the world, whether antecedent or subsequent, to the institution of Christianity, could have afforded clearer lights or higher aids than the present? or would have conduced to make us wiser, better, or happier? Let us be assured, that if we do not see truth with sufficient distinctness, it is not our own position, nor that of the object, which is in fault, but the organ itself.

It is not to our present purpose to insist on the internal evidence of Christianity; on that witness within—that conviction of the Christian's own mind, arguing so strongly the truth of Revelation from its correspondence to his own wants—because this is an evidence equally accessible to the believer of every period. We shall, therefore, only offer a few observations on the superior advantages which we at present enjoy, as well from other causes, as from the fulness of the external evidence which has been undeniably established upon the profoundest knowledge and closest examination of the Sacred Records, by so many of our wisest and soundest divines.

We have, for our assistance in religious knowledge, the collective wisdom of sacred antiquity; and for our furtherance in piety, its precepts, its monitions, its examples. It is also the peculiar honour of our apostle, that from his life and writings *alone*, a new confirmation of the truth of the Gospel which he preached, has been recently and completely made out. In addition to the fullest general evidence of the authenticity of the New Testament, two of our own contemporaries—men of different rank, habits, education, and turn of mind,—have extracted from the writings of Saint Paul *exclusively*, particular and collateral evidence of a most interesting and important nature. We refer, in the first instance, to a small but valuable work of a noble author,* himself a convert of no common order, in which he lays down, and substantially proves the truth of his position, that *the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, is, of itself, a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a Divine Revelation.* Into these circumstances, which it is probable powerfully assisted his own convictions, he has with great diligence examined; and has with irresistible strength proposed them for the conviction of others.

In the other instance, we refer to that exquisite work, the 'Horæ Paulinæ,' of Doctor Paley; a work which exhibits a species of evidence as original as it is incontrovertible. It is a corroboration of the truth of the New Testament, derived from the incidental but close correspondence of numberless passages in the life and travels of Saint Paul, related in the Acts, with his own repeated reference, in his Epistles, to the same circumstances, persons, places, and events; together with their most correct geographical agreement;—the respective authors of both writings uniformly and consistently though unintentionally, throwing light on each other.

This interesting work, in a more especial manner, adds weight to facts which were already

* Lord Littleton

fully established, and strength to that 'truth' which was before 'barred up with ribs of iron.' We cannot too highly estimate this subsidiary evidence to the Christian revelation, derived as it were casually and incidentally from our apostle, from him to whom we were already unspeakably indebted for so much direct spiritual and practical instruction. It is a species of evidence so ingenious, yet so solid, so clear and so decisive, that the author must have carried his point in any court of judicature before which the cause might have been brought.

If it were not the very genius of scepticism to shrink its 'shrivelled essence' down to the minutest point, when it wishes to work itself an entrance where no visible opening seems previously to have been left, we should think, that, after the able defences of Revelation which have been made on general grounds, the addition of these partial and subordinate, but not less convincing proofs, had not left even the smallest crevice through which Unbelief could force, or even Doubt insinuate its way.

But to quit this more limited channel of conviction for the broad current of general Scripture, let us examine what period would have been more favourable, not only for the confirmation of our belief, but for our moral, our intellectual and spiritual improvement. Let us institute an inquiry, (if a few cursory and superficial remarks may be so called,) whether all those whose supposed superior opportunities of religious improvement we are disposed to envy, really possessed more advantages than ourselves; and whether many among them were indeed, in consequence of their peculiar situation to make the best use of those which they actually did possess.

How very few of those who were not only countrymen, but contemporaries of our blessed Redeemer, believed in him, or at least persevered in their belief! Even of his immediate disciples, even of his select friends, of the favoured few who beheld the beautiful consistency of his daily life, who were more intimately privileged to hear the gracious words which proceeded from his lips: we pass by the Son of Perdition:—one had not courage so much as to acknowledge that he knew him; another doubted his identity after his resurrection. In the moment of exquisite distress, *they all forsook him.* His own 'familiar friends' abandoned him, 'and of the people there was none with him.'

Where then were the peculiar, the enviable advantages, of that situation, placed in which, the fervent Peter, who declared that though all men should forsake him, yet would not he; yet Peter forgot his oath, and forfeited his fidelity! Can we affirm, that we have stronger or more tender religious attachments, than 'the disciple whom Jesus loved?' Yet was he one of that *all* who forsook him. Are we sure that it is a superiority in our faith, rather than in our circumstances, which makes us to differ from those affectionate but troubled companions, who, after his crucifixion, sunk into the most hopeless despondency:—'We *trusted* that this should have been He who should have redeemed Israel.' Cannot we, on the contrary, exultingly say, We *know* that this was He who has redeemed, not Israel only, but every penitent believer, of every people, and kindred, and nation, to the end of the world. After the truth of our Lord's divine mission had been ratified by his resurrection from the dead, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, how many who heard the preaching, and beheld the miracles of his apostles, remained hardened in incredulity! In the ages immediately succeeding the promulgation of the Gospel, even while its verities were new, and the sense of its blessings fresh, many of its professors fell into gross errors; some tainted its purity by infusions of their own; others incorporated with it the corruptions of Paganism. Many became hereties, some became apostates, not a few renounced Christianity, and more perhaps dishonoured it.

Does not Saint Paul, after his incessant labours, even after his apparent success in one quarter of the globe, sorrowfully exclaim to his friend, 'Thou knowest that *all* they which are in Asia be turned away from me.' He then proceeds to enumerate individuals, of whom, it may be presumed, that he once entertained better hopes. While, therefore, we possess the works of this great apostle, and still many continue to receive so little benefit from them, let not any deceive themselves with the notion, that they would have derived infallible sanctification from his personal preaching; but let them remember, that all proconsular Asia,* who enjoyed that blessing, deserted both him and the Gospel. May not even the advantage, considered in some points of view, be reckoned on our side? If we may trust his own humble report of himself, 'his letters,' he says, 'were allowed to be more weighty and powerful than his bodily presence.'

If so many were perverted, who had the privilege of standing the nearest to the fountain of light, who even drank immediately from the living spring itself, shall we look for a more luminous exhibition or more privileged exercise, or more sincere 'obedience' of Christian 'faith,' in the middle ages, when, in truth, religion was in a good measure extinguished; when the Christian world had sunk into almost primeval darkness; 'when Christianity,' to borrow the words of Melancthon, 'was become a mere compound of philosophy and superstition;' when what religion did survive, was confined to a few, was immured in cloisters, was exhausted in quibbles, was wasted in unprofitable subtleties, was exhibited with little speculative clearness, and less practical influence?

Even when literature and religion awoke together from their long slumber, when Christianity was renovated and purified, the glorious beams of the Reformation did not diffuse universal illumination. Even by better disposed but partially enlightened minds, contention was too frequently mistaken for piety, and debate substituted for devotion.

Of how different a spirit from these wrangling Polemics was Saint Paul! Though he repeatedly exhorts his friends, especially Timothy, in instructing his people, to watch particularly 'over their doctrine,' the grand foundation on

* 2 Timothy, ch. i.

which all preaching must be built, yet he ever shows himself an enemy to controversy, to frivolous disputes, and idle contention. He directs his converts, not to waste the time and strength, which should be reserved for great occasions, *about words to no profit, but subverting the hearers.* And, perhaps, there has seldom been less genuine piety in the church than when intricate and theoretical points in theology have been most pertinaciously discussed. This is not 'contending for the faith once delivered to the saints,' but diverting the attention from faith, and alienating the heart from charity.

We do not mean to censure a spirit of enquiry, nor to repress earnestness, in the solution of difficulties. It is indeed the very essence of an inquiring mind freely to start doubts, as it is of a learned and enlightened age rationally to solve them. On this point we are quite of the opinion of a good old Divine, that 'nothing is so certain as that which is certain after doubts.' But compared even with the latter period of religious light and information, how far superior is our own? We who have the happiness to live in the present age, live, when truth has had time to force its way through all the obscurities which had been raised about it, to prevent its access to the understanding. If we rightly appreciate our advantages, we shall truly find that no country, in any age, was ever placed in a fairer position for improvement in wisdom, in piety, and happiness. A black cloud indeed, charged with sulphureous matter, for a long time was suspended over our heads; but, providentially directed, it passed on, and bursting, spread conflagration over other lands. By the most exact retributive justice, those very countries in which the modern Titans first assaulted Heaven, became the first scene of total desolation.—In other places we have seen experiments tried, new in their nature, terrible in their progress, and worse than fruitless in their results. We have seen a great nation endeavouring to show the world that they could do without God. We have seen them exclude the Maker from his own creation! and to complete the opposition between their own government and His whom they gloried in dethroning, they used their impiously assumed power for the extermination of the species which he had created, for the destruction of the souls whom he had sent his Son to redeem.'

If, however, in our own age, and perhaps our own country, Christianity has not only been boldly opposed, but audaciously villified, it has been only so much the more seriously examined, so much the more vigorously defended. If its truth has been questioned by some, and denied by others, it has been only the more carefully sifted, the more satisfactorily cleared. The clouds in which sophistry had sought to envelope it, are dispersed; the charges which scepticism had brought against it are repelled. The facts, arch-like, have been strengthened by being trampled upon. Infidelity has done its worst, and by the energy of its efforts, and the failure of its attempts, has shown how little it could do. Wit, and ingenuity, and argument have contributed each its quota to confirm the truths which wit, and ingenuity, and argument, had undertaken to subvert. Talents on the wrong side have elicited superior talents on the right, and the champions of the Gospel have beaten its assailants with their own weapons. Phyrrhonism has been beneficial, for by propagating its doubts it has caused them to be obviated. Even Atheism itself has not been without its uses, for by obtruding its impieties, it has brought defeat on the objections, and abhorrence on their abettors. Thus the enemies of our faith have done service to our cause, for they have not advanced a single charge against it, which has not been followed by complete refutation; the shaking of the torch has caused it to diffuse a clearer and stronger light.

Let us once more resume the comparison of our advantages, and the use we make of them, with the advantages and the conduct of these ancient servants of God, in considering whom, perhaps, we mingle envy with our admiration. How fervently did these saints of the Old Testament pant for that full blaze of light under which we live, and for which we are so little thankful!—'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!' was the heart-felt apostrophe of a devout patriarch. The aged saint who 'waited for the consolation of Israel, and rapturously sung his *Nunc dimittis*,'—the ancient prophetess, who departed not from the temple, who desisted not from prayer day or night;—the father of the Baptist, who 'blessed the Lord God of Israel that he had visited and redeemed his people;'*—how small were their advantages compared with ours.' How weak is our faith, how freezing our gratitude compared with theirs! † They only beheld in their Saviour a feeble infant;—they had not heard, as we have heard, from the most undeniable authority, the perfections of his life, nor the miracles of his power, nor the works of his mercy, nor his triumph over death, nor his ascension into Heaven, nor the descent of the Comforter. They had witnessed a large portion of the globe brought within the Christian pale by the preaching of that Gospel, the dawn of which so exhilirated their overflowing hearts. If full beatitude is promised to them who have not seen, and yet have believed; what will be the state of those who virtually *have* seen, and yet have not believed?

Had any patriarch, or saint, who was permitted only some rare and transient glimpses of the promised blessing, being allowed in prophetic vision to penetrate through the long vista of ages, which lay in remote futurity before him—had he been asked whether, if his power concurred with his choice, in what age and in what nation he would have wished his lot assigned him—is it not more than probable that he would have replied—IN GREAT BRITAIN, IN THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

May we not venture to assert, that there are, at this moment, on the whole, more helps and fewer hindrances to the operation of Christian piety, than at any preceding period? May we not assert, that at no time has the genuine religion of the Gospel been more precisely defined, more completely stript of human inventions, more purified from philosophical infusions on

* Luke, ch. i. † Luke, ch. ii

one hand, and on the other more cleared from superstitious perversions, fanatical intemperance, and debasing associations? That there still exist among us philosophists and fanatics, not a few, we are far from denying; but neither is the distortion of faith in the one party, nor its subversion in the other, the prevailing character; good sense and right mindedness predominate in our general views of Christianity.

If it be objected that there is a very powerful aid wanting to the confirmation of *our* faith, which the age of the apostles presented—that of miraculous gifts—the obvious answer is, that if they have ceased, it is because they have fully answered the end for which they were conferred, and is not the withdrawing of these extraordinary endowments more than compensated by the fulfilment of so many of the prophecies of the New Testament, and the anticipation of the near approach of others, yet unaccomplished? In the mean time have we not the perpetual attestation of those living miracles, the unaltered state of the Jewish Church, and the frequent internal renovation of the human heart?

There is not a more striking feature in the character of the Royal Psalmist, than the fervent and reiterated expressions of his love and admiration of the Holy Scriptures. In what a variety of rapturous strains does he pour out the overflowings of his ardent soul! 'Oh! how I love thy law! Thy word is a lamp to my feet—Oh teach me thy statutes! Thy words have I hid within my heart—Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law!' To give a full view of his affectionate effusions, would be to transcribe the larger portion of the Psalms. To paraphrase his words, would be to dilute essential spirit.

Let us pause a moment, and while we admire this holy fervency, let us blush at our own ingratitude for advantages so superior: let us lament our own want of spiritual sensibility. Let us be humbled at the reflection, how very small was the portion of Scripture with which David was acquainted! How comparatively little did he know of that divine book, yet what holy transport was kindled by that little! He knew scarcely more than the Pentateuch, and one or two contemporary prophets. Then let us turn our eyes to the full revelation under which we live, and be grateful for the meridian splendour.

Had David seen, as we see, the predictions of the late prophetical writers, those of Isaiah especially, to say nothing of his own, fulfilled—had he seen, as we have seen their glorious accomplishment in the New Testament—the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, the plenary gift of the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of types, the substantiation of shadows, the solution of figures, the destruction of Jerusalem, the wide propagation of the everlasting Gospel, and that in far more tongues than were heard on the day of Pentecost,—had he seen a Bible in every cottage—a little seminary of Christian institution in every village—had he beheld the firm establishment of the Christian Church, no longer opposed, but supported by secular powers, after having conquered opposition by weapons purely spiritual—had he seen a standing ministry continued in a regular succession from the age of the apostles to the present hour—had he seen, in addition to these *domestic* blessings, England emancipating Africa and evangelizing India, commerce spreading her sails to promote civilization, and Christianity elevating civilization and sanctifying commerce—had the Royal Saint witnessed this combination of mercies in one single country, what had his feelings been?

He who so passionately exclaimed, 'Oh how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts.—my soul hath a desire and a longing to enter into the courts of the Lord—blessed are they that dwell in thine house—one day in thy courts is better than a thousand—one thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple'—this conqueror of the heathen, this denouncer of false gods, this chosen monarch of the chosen people, this fervent lover of the devotions of the Sanctuary, this hallowed poet of Sion, this noble contributor to *our* public worship, this man after God's own heart, was not permitted to build one single church—we in this island only, possess ten thousand.

But some may say, the apostles had supernatural supports, which are withheld from us. Their supports were doubtless proportioned to the fervency of their faith, and to the extraordinary emergencies on which they were called to act. But as we had occasion to remark in a former chapter, these assistances seem to have been reserved for occasions to which we are not called; and to be dispensed to them for others rather than for themselves. We do not find that they who could cure diseases, were exempted from suffering them; that they who could raise others from the dead, escaped a violent death themselves. We do not find that the aids afforded them, were given to extinguish their natural feelings, to lighten their burdens, to rescue them from the vicissitudes of a painful life, from poverty or sorrows, from calumny or disgrace. Though Saint Paul converted the jailor, he had nevertheless been his prisoner; though he had been the instrument of making 'saints even in Cæsar's household,' he was not delivered from perishing by Cæsar's sword.

It does not appear that in their ordinary transactions they had the assistance of more than the ordinary operations of the Spirit. These, blessed be Almighty Goodness! are not limited to prophets or apostles, but promised to all sincere believers to the end of the world: communicated in a measure proportioned to their faith, and accommodated to their exigencies. The treasures of grace, unlike all other treasures, are not to be exhausted by using; but like the multiplication of loaves, more is left to be gathered up after the gift is used, than was imparted in the first instance.

CHAP. XXII.

Conclusion.—Cursory inquiry into some of the causes which impeded General Improvement.

If we, in this favourite country, and at this

favoured period, are not as internally happy as we are outwardly prosperous; if we do not reach that elevation in piety; if we do not exhibit that consistency of character, which, from the advantages of our position, might be expected; if innumerable providential distinctions are conferred without being proportionally improved; if we are rejoicing for public blessings, without so profiting by them as to make advancement in private virtue and personal religion;—should we not diligently inquire in what particulars our deficiencies chiefly consist, and what are the obstructions which especially impede our progress?

That middle course which the luke-warm istian takes, he takes partly because it seems rry with it many present advantages, which the genuine Christian loses. This measured conduct obtains for him that general popularity, the desire of which is his main spring of action. He secures the friendship of worldly men, because he can accommodate his taste to their conversation, and bend his views to their practices. As he is not profligate, the pious who are naturally candid, judge him favourably, and entertain hopes of his becoming all they wish; so that he unites the credit of their good opinion with the pleasure derived from the society of the others. A neutral character thus converts every thing to his own profit, avoids the suspicion attached to saints, and the disgrace inseparable from sinners. To disoblige the world, is, upon his principles, a price almost too high for the purchase of heaven itself. Is it not doubtful, whether he who accounts it so easy a matter to be a Christian, *is* a Christian in reality? To such an one, indeed, it is as easy as it is pleasant to reckon upon heaven; but can any, without faith and without patience, be followers of them, who, 'through faith and patience inherit the promises?'

The truth is, mere men of the world do not conceive a very formidable opinion of the real evil of sin: they think slightly of it because it is so common; they even think almost favourably, at least they think charitably of it, when they see that even good men are not altogether exempt from it. From carelessness, or an erroneous kindness, they entertain a tender opinion of what they perceive to be a constant attendant on human nature: they plead, in its vindication, the mercy of God, the weakness of man, the power of temptation; and are apt to construe a strict judgment on the thing into an uncharitable harshness on the man. For this forbearance they expect to be paid in kind, to be paid with interest; for their very charity is usurious. The least religious however, often resent keenly those crimes which offend against society; of sins which affect their own interest, they are the most forward to seek legal redress. But they do not feel that some of the worst corruptions are of a spiritual nature; and to those which only offend God, they never show themselves tenderly alive.

But if they were brought to entertain just notions of the glorious majesty of God, they would soon learn to see how sin dishonours it; nor could an adequate view of his unspeakable holiness fail of leading them to a thorough hatred of every thing which is in direct opposition to it. If, however, their own impure vision prevents them from perceiving how deeply sin must offend the infinite purity of God, they might at least be awfully convinced of its malignant nature, by contemplating the wide and lasting ravages it has made among the human race. That can be no inconsiderable evil, which has been perpetuating itself, and entailing misery on its perpetrators for nearly six thousand years.

Many are too much disposed to confound a confident feeling of security with religious peace. Conscience, whose suggestions were perhaps once clamorous, may, from long neglect, have become gradually less and less audible. The more obtuse the feelings grow, the less disturbance they give. This moral deadness assumes the name of tranquillity and, as Galgacus said of the Roman conquerors, in his noble speech on the Grampian hills, 'when they have laid all waste, they call the desolation Peace.'

Is there not a growing appearance, that many are substituting for the integrity of Christian doctrine, as taught in the Gospel, a religion compounded chiefly of the purer elements of Deism, amalgamated with some of the more popular attributes of Christianity! If the apostle, after all his high attainments, 'was determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' shall a deteriorated, or, as it is pleased to call itself, a liberal Christianity, lead its votaries to be satisfied with knowing every thing except him; that is, to be satisfied without knowing him in such a manner, as at once to believe in him as a prophet, and to be ruled by him as a king; at once to obey him as a teacher, and trust in him as a Saviour?

On the other hand, let us remember, that we may be correct in our creed without possessing a living faith. We may be right in our opinions, without any cordial concurrence of the heart, or any obedient subjugation of the will. We may be regular in the forms of devotion, and irregular in our passions. We may be temperate in what regards the animal appetites, and intemperate in the indulgence of evil tempers. We may be proud of our own orthodoxy, while we ridicule a serious spirit in another professor of the same opinions. We may maintain a customary habit of prayer, while we are destitute of that spirit, without which prayer is unavailable. May not some pray without invoking the mediation of the great Intercessor? May he not say to some now, as he said to his disciples, *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name?* We do not mean so invoking him, as to round the closing period with his name, but so regarding him, as to make him the general medium of our intercourse with heaven.

And is it not an increasing evil, that there seems to prevail among some, a habit, so to speak, of generalizing religion, of melting down the peculiar principles of Christianity, till its grand truths are blended in the fusion, and come out of the crucible without any distinctive character? A fundamental doctrine of our religion is, with many, grown not only into disuse, but discredit. But unless a man can seriously say that his natural powers are fully effectual for his practical duties; that he is uniformly able

of himself to pursue the right which he approves, and to avoid the wrong which he condemns, and to surmount the evil which he laments, and to resist the temptations which he feels, it should seem that he ought in reason to be deeply thankful for that divine aid which the Gospel promises, and on which Saint Paul descants with such perpetual emphasis; that he ought gladly to implore its communication by the means prescribed by this great apostle.

If a man does not set up on his own strength; if he cannot live upon his own resources, if he finds that his good intentions are often frustrated, his firmest purposes forgotten, his best resolutions broken; if he feels that he cannot change his own heart; if he believes that there is a real spiritual assistance offered, and that the communication of this aid is promised to fervent prayer; it should seem to follow, as a necessary consequence, that this interior sentiment would lower his opinion of himself, change his notions of the Divine character, diminish his feeling of self-dependence, loosen his attachment to sense, make him more indifferent to human opinion, and more solicitous for the favour of God. This humbling, yet elevating intercourse with heaven, would seem to convince him feelingly, that of himself he can do nothing; that human estimation can confer no intrinsic value, because it cannot make us what we are not; and that we *are*, in reality, only what we are in the sight of God.

There is another cause which hurts the interests of religion. Injurious names are reciprocally given to the most imperious duties; parties take different sides, and match them each against the other as if they were opposite interests. But no power of *words* can alter the nature of *things*. Good works are not Popery; nor is faith Methodism. Yet, is not a spiritual litigation vigorously carried on between two principles, both of which are of the very essence of the Gospel, and bound up therein in the most intimate and indissoluble union? Let us not reject a truth because it is misrepresented by those who do not understand it. We know that a learned bishop was condemned by an ignorant pope, for propagating no worse a heresy than that there were Antipodes.

Many, again, desire to be religious, but suffer the desire to die away without any effort to substantiate it; without any cordial adoption of the means which might produce the effect. Yet, with this inoperative desire, the languid Christian quiets conscience, and is satisfied with referring to this unproductive wish as an evidence of his sincerity. The effect is similar to that of a deceitful anodyne, which lulls pain without removing its cause. There are those who may be said to swallow religion as something which they are told it is their duty to *take*, in order to do them good. They therefore receive it in the lump, and then dismiss it from their thoughts as a thing done. It is no wonder if the success is proportioned to the measure. But would the apostle have so strenuously insisted on the necessity of being, '*renewed from day to day*,' if there were any *definite* day in which it could be affirmed that the work had been accomplished? and can any thing short of such accomplishment, justify us in desisting to press forward after it?

If, then, we would embrace Christianity as a life-giving principle, we must examine it analytically; we must resolve it into the several parts of which it is compounded, instead of considering it as a nostrum the effect of which is to be produced by our ignorance of the ingredients of which it is made up. To subscribe articles of faith, without knowing what consequences they involve—to be satisfied with having them propounded, without entering into the spirit of our obligation to obey them—to acknowledge their truth, without examining our own interest in them, is not only to be an imperfect, but an irrational Christian.

While the political and moral improvement of the world around us seems, in many respects, to be constantaneously advancing, let not *us*, of this highly distinguished land, frustrate the grand objects which we have been the honoured instruments of establishing. Britain presents a spectacle, on which, if the world gazes with an admiring, it will gaze also with a scrutinizing eye. Those whom we have served and saved, will jealously inquire—for the obliged are not the least prying—Whether we live up to the high tone we assume?—Whether we obey the Gospel we extol?—Whether we are religious in person, or by proxy?—Whether all who disperse the Scriptures, read them?—May not the critical observer be inclined to parody the interrogatories of our apostle to the censorious Jews.* Thou that sayest another should not swear, art thou guilty of profane levity? Thou that sayest a man should keep the sixth and seventh commandments, dost thou shrink from duelling and libertinism? Thou, who holdest out a fair example in attending the solemnities of the Sunday morning's worship, dost thou attend likewise the unhallowed festivities of the evening? Thou that art valiant in the field, art thou also 'valiant for the truth?' Thou who, professing 'pure religion and undefiled,' visitest the fatherless and widow with thy purse, dost thou keep thyself 'unspotted from the world?' Let it be observed, that these are hypothetical questions, not rash accusations.

The public munificence and private bounties of this age and country have outgone all example. An almost boundless benevolence has annihilated all distinction of religion and of party, of country and of colour. No difference of opinion, no contrariety of feeling, has checked its astonishing operation, has chilled its ardent flame. No object is too vast for its grasp, none is too minute for its attention. The moral energies of the country have kept pace with the military and political. Charity, too, has been intimately connected with religion; and we may hope, it is to the growth of the latter principle, that we are to ascribe the former practical effect.

It remains with us to give substantial proof, that the right practice has flowed from the true principle. Let us never give occasion to the members of another church to infer, that even Protestants are not practically averse from the purchase of *indulgencies*. Let us not give them

* Roman, xxi. 22.

the slightest cause for imputing to any of our acts of beneficence a spirit of commutation. Let them not see, that sobriety, purity, and self-control, are considered by many of us as minor statutes in the Christian code. Let it not be said, that personal holiness is laid asleep by the soothing blandishments of liberal profession; by the misapplied tenderness of candid construction; by a toleration which justifies the doing much which is not right in ourselves, because we make large allowances for whatever is wrong in others. To judge charitably, is a Christian precept; but religion no more permits us to judge falsely, than to act censurably. To the affluent it is cheaper, and to the inconsiderate it is easier, to relieve others, than to deny ourselves. Let them remember, however, that though to give liberally is nobly right; yet to act consistently is indispensably requisite, if we would make that which is in itself right acceptable to God; and let even the most benevolent never fail to reflect, that nothing *can* swell the tide of charity to its full flow, but self-denial.

If some among us were to make their public bounties the measure of their domestic conduct, it would be setting up for themselves a high practical standard: yet it might be fair to make it so. Such liberal persons might do well to consider how far, in every subscription they pay, they do not give a sort of public pledge of their general practice; and how far, in order to be honest, they are not bound to redeem the deposit by their general correctness. Is it not a species of deceit to appear better than we are? And do we not virtually practice this deceit when our self-government is obviously not of a piece with our liberality?

Do we then undervalue charity? God forbid. Charity is a grace so peculiarly Christian, that it is said to have been practised in those countries only where Revelation has been enjoyed either by possession or tradition. Of the historians of ancient times, who have transmitted to us the fame of their military skill, their political glory, their literary talents, their public spirit, or domestic virtues, none have made any mention of their charitable institutions; none have made any mention of a great nation receiving into its bosom, in the moment of imminent danger, of foreign war, and pressing domestic distress, myriads of exiles from the enemy's country; of their receiving and supporting thousands upon thousands of the priesthood of a religion so hostile to their own, as scarcely to allow them to believe that there was salvation for their benefactors.

Benevolence is the most lovely associate of the other Christian virtues. We mistake only when we adopt her as their substitute. Excellence in this grand article is so far from procuring a dispensation from the other graces of piety, that she only raises the demand for their loftier exercise. In the Christian race, however, the fleeter virtue must not slacken her speed, lest her competitors should be distanced. No; the lagging attributes must quicken theirs.

We trust that we have not, in any part of this little work, attempted to degrade human reason. Is it degrading any quality or faculty, to assign to it its proper place, to ascribe to it its precise value? Reason and religion accord as completely in practice as in principle; and is it not a subject of gratitude to God, that as there is nothing in Christian belief, so there is nothing in Christian practice, but what is consonant to views purely rational. Every disorder, irregularity, and excess, which religion prohibits, is as contrary to our comfort, health, and happiness here, as it is fatal to our eternal interests; and should be equally avoided on the ground of natural and spiritual judgment. Nay, if Christians are accused by the infidel of selfish motives, in obeying God for their own interest; is there not more absurdity in disobeying Him, when, by so doing, we forfeit every thing which a well-directed self-love would show to be our highest advantage, and which common sense, human prudence, worldly wisdom, would teach us to pursue.

Saint Paul combats all those partialities of judgment which arise from the understanding submitting itself to the will, from conviction yielding to inclination. As it was the truth of the principle, the rectitude of the act, which determined his judgment, so we read him to little purpose, if the same qualities do not also determine ours. But men submit to unexamined predilections; they do not allow themselves to be convinced of any thing with which they are not first pleased. Practical errors are rarely adopted from conviction, but almost always from inclination.

Our apostle frequently includes 'lovers of their ownselves' in his catalogue of grievous offenders. He considers selfishness as a state of mind inconsistent with Christianity. No other religion, indeed, had ever shown that it was sinful; no other had ever taught its followers to resist it; no other had furnished arms against it, had enabled its disciples to conquer it. Yet, may we not venture to assert, that among the prominent faults of this our age, is a growing selfishness. We mean not that sullen selfishness which used to display itself in penurious habits, in shabby parsimony, and a sordid frugality, which received part of its punishment in the self-inflicted severities of its votary, and part in the discredit and contempt which attended it. But we mean, that luxurious selfishness which has its own gratification in the vanity it indulges; and its own reward in the envy it secretly awakens, in the admiration it openly excites.

The tide of an increasing dissipation, gorgeous, costly, and voluptuous beyond all precedent, has swept away the mounds and ramparts within which prudence in expense, and sobriety in manners, had heretofore confined it. Strange! that fashion and custom, and the example of others, are brought forward as a vindication by beings, who know they must be themselves individually responsible for the errors and the sins into which they are plunged by imitation, as well as by original evil. *Numbers* are pleaded as a valid apology for being carried headlong down the torrent. But have we ever heard that the plague was thought a slighter distemper from the greatness of the numbers infected? On the contrary, is not the extent of the ravage its most alarming symptom? and is not the weekly diminution in

the numbers publicly registered as the only signal of returning health?

God has blessed the late unparalleled exertions of this country with a proportionate success. Honour and glory crown our land. But honour and glory are not primary stars; they borrow their lustre from that immortal principle which is the fountain of all moral illumination. Let us bear in mind that to be prosperous without piety, or joyful without gratitude, or thankful without repentance, or penitent without amendment, is to forfeit the favour of HIM from whom all prosperity is derived. We are told in the oracles of God, that the corruptions of an irreligious nation converted blessings into sins, when 'pride and abundance of idleness' were the ungrateful returns for 'fulness of bread.'

Though we no longer perceive that open alienation from God, so apparent in the commencement of the French Revolution, yet do we perceive that return to Him which the restoration of our prosperity demands? Has the design of the Almighty, in visiting us with the calamities of a protracted war been answered by a renunciation of the sins for which it was sent? Has his goodness, in putting a happy period to these calamities, been practically acknowledged? acknowledged, not merely by the public recognition of a wisely appointed day, but by a visible reformation of our habits and manners?

We are now most imperatively called upon to give unequivocal proof, that our devotion, in the late twenty years succession of national fasts, had some meaning in it, beyond the bare compliance with authority, beyond the mere impulse of terror. Let it not be inferred, from any apparent slackness of principle, that ours was the prayer of nature for relief, more than of grace for pardon; the cry for escape from danger, rather than for deliverance from sin.

As God has abundantly granted us all the temporal blessings for which we then solicited, let us give full proof that our petitions were spiritual as well as political; as He, in pity, has withdrawn the anger of his chastisements, let us, in gratitude, take away the provocation, of our offences. He has long tried us with correction, he is now trying us with mercies. If, as we are told, when his judgments are abroad in the earth, we should learn righteousness, what should we *not* learn, what should we *not* practice, when blessings are accumulated upon us—blessings, more multiplied in their number, more ample in their extent, more valuable in their nature, more fraught with present advantages, more calculated for our eternal good, than ever were experienced by our ancestors in any period of our history?

Let us not triumphantly compare ourselves with worse nations, unless we know what use they would have made of mercies which we have neglected; let us not glory in our superiority to countries who have had to plead a bad government, and a worse religion. To be better than those who are bad, is a low superiority now, and will not be admitted as a reason for our acquittal hereafter. Corrupt Tyre, profligate Zidon, whose extinction the prophet Ezekiel had predicted in the most portentous menaces, were pronounced by *Infinite Compassion* to be far less criminal than the *instructed* people to whom the pathetic admonition was addressed. If blindness and ignorance might be offered as a plea for those heathen cities, what should extenuate the guilt of the enlightened regions of Galilee.

It was on the most solemn of all occasions that of a description of the general resurrection, that St. Paul breaks in on his own awful discussion, to suggest the 'corruption of manners' inseparable from 'evil communications.' Does it not give an alarming idea of his serious view of the subject, that he should so intimately connect it with the immmediate concerns of the eternal world? Can we safely separate a cause and a consequence which he has so indissolubly joined?

As the joy felt by the patriarchal family in the ark, when the bird of peace, with its symbol in her mouth, returned to this little remnant of an annihilated world; such, in its kind was the joy experienced when the voice of the charmer was recently heard on our shores, and throughout an almost desolated quarter of the globe. But let not our own country forget that this peace, so fervently desired, and so graciously accorded, may, by our neglecting to improve the blessing, become more fatally and irretrievably injurious, than that state of hostility which we have so long and so justly deplored. Let us not forget, that shutting the gates of the temple of Janus, by opening those of Paris, may only have changed the nature, while it has deteriorated the character, of the warfare.

What incantation is there in the name of Peace, that could, as by the touch of a magician's wand, produce, at once, a total revolution in the character of a people, and in our opinion of them? What charm is there in a *sound* that could so transform a great nation, abandoned for a quarter of a century to boundless vice, and avowed infidelity, as to render familiar intercourse with them profitable, or their society even safe; which could instantaneously convert this scene of alarm, into a scene of irresistible attraction; could cause, at once, this land of terror to be desired as impatiently, and sought as impetuously, as if it had been the Land of Promise?

Will the borrowed glory, or rather the stolen renown, arising from pilfered pictures, or plundered statues; will the splendour of public buildings, buildings cemented with the blood of millions; will all the works of art, however exquisite, atone for the degradation of the human, and it may be almost said the extinction of the Christian character? Will marbles, and paintings, and edifices, expiate the utter contempt of morality, and all the other still lingering effects of the legal abolition of Christianity and the public disavowal of God? Will the flower of England, the promising sons and blooming daughters of our nobles and our gentry reap a measure of improvement from these exhibitions of genius, which may be likely to compensate for the pernicious associations with which they may be accompanied?

Have we forgotten, that the mother of the fine arts, licentious Greece, injured Rome in her vital interests, her character, her honour, and her principles, more irretrievably, than all her losses

during her military conflict with them had done? that this great people, the England of antiquity, never lost sight of her grandeur, never sacrificed her superiority, but when she stooped to imitate the vices, to adopt the manners, and to import the philosophy of the vanquished enemy; and, in short, that Greece amply revenged herself on her conqueror by a contact, which communicated an inextinguishable moral contagion.

To revert to a remoter, and a higher source; did not the chosen people of God suffer more essentially in their most important interests, by their familiar communications, after their conquest, with the polluted Canaanites, than in their long and perilous warfare with them?

Let not these necessary inquiries be construed into the language of vulgar prejudice, into the unchristian wish to perpetuate an unjustifiable aversion to a nation, because they have been our political enemies. We feel no desire, like the Carthagenian father, to entail our own hatred on our offspring, to make our posterity vow interminable hostility to a people, because their predecessors have suffered by them. We have no wish to persist in personal alienation from any country, especially from one which Divine Providence has made our nearest neighbour.—God forbid!

But may we not venture, with all diffidence, to ask, should there not be a little space allowed them, after their deep pollution, to perform that quarantine, which even our ships are obliged to undergo, before we receive them on our own shores? May we not further ask, in the present instance, if by plunging into the infection on theirs, we do not fearfully aggravate the peril of the pestilence?

In these observations we are conscious of wandering into illimitable topics—topics which may appear irrelevant to our general object. It is fit we should resume that object, and draw to a close.

Let us observe, for our own imitation, that what Saint Paul might be called to do, or to suffer, in the intermediate stages to his final rest, he knew not, nor was he solicitous to know. Of one thing he was assured, that a day was coming, when, whatever now appeared mysterious, would be made clear.—While others only knew *Him* of whom they had *heard*, he knew *Him* in whom he *believed*. He desired no other ground of confidence. All those superior concerns, on which his heart was set, lay beyond the grave; lay in the hands of Him to whom he had trusted all which he accounted valuable. The soul which he had committed to his Saviour, he knew that this Saviour 'was able to preserve against that day.' Swallowed up in the grandeur of the thought, he disregards the common forms of speech, and leaves it to his friend to supply what was rather understood than expressed—*what day he meant*.

If it is astonishing that any should disbelieve a religion, which has such unparalleled attestations to its truth, as the religion which Saint Paul preached, is it not far more astonishing that, professing not to have any doubt of its truth, any should continue to live as if they believed it to be false; that any should live without habitual reference *to that day*, to which his writings so repeatedly point, without labouring after a practical conviction of that paramount doctrine on which he so unweariedly descants, the benefits of the death of Christ?

This doctrine our apostle has, beyond all other writers, irrefragably proved to be the only argument of real efficacy against our own fear of death. All the reasonings of philosophy, all the motives drawn from natural religion, all the self-complacent retrospection of our own virtues, afford no substantial support against it. This great doctrine, as the apostle also repeatedly proves, supplies the only principles which can set us above the sorrows of life. Mere morality often raises us above the grosser corruptions of sense, but it does not raise us above the entanglements of the world; it does not lift us above perplexing fears and anxious solicitudes; it does not raise us above the agitations of desire; it does not rescue us from the doubts and harassings of an unsettled mind; it does not deliver us from the pangs of an awakened conscience. A mere moral taste may sustain character and support credit, but it does not produce present holiness, nor peace, nor a hope full of immortality. It neither communicates strength to obey, nor power to resist, nor a heart to love, nor a will to serve.

Let us then study with holy Paul, that Gospel wherein the true secret of happiness, as well as the great mystery of godliness, is revealed. Our Divine Teacher does not say *read*, but *search* the Scriptures. Its doctrines are of everlasting interest. All the great objects of history lose their value, as through the lapse of time they recede farther from us; but those of the book of God are commensurate with the immortality of our nature. All existing circumstances, as they relate to this world merely, lose their importance as they lose their novelty; they even melt in air as they pass before us.

While we are discussing events they cease to be; while we are criticising customs they become obsolete; while we are adopting fashions they vanish; while we are condemning or defending parties, they change sides. While we are contemplating feuds, opposing factions, or deploring revolutions, they are extinct. Of created things, mutability is their character at the best, brevity their duration at the longest. But 'the word of the Lord endureth for ever.' All that the heart craves, that word supplies. *This* state of things is all instability; the Gospel points 'to a city which hath foundations.' *Here* we have, beyond any other age or people, seen the kingdoms of this world transferred, depopulated, destroyed: *there* we are promised a kingdom which cannot be moved.

With Holy Paul then let us take the Bible for the subject of our meditation, for the ground of our prayer, the rule of our conduct, the anchor of our hope, the standard of our faith. Let us seriously examine whether this faith is built on the same eternal basis with that of the apostle, whose character we have been contemplating, whether we are endeavouring to erect upon it a superstructure of practical goodness worthy of the broad and sure foundation?

Let us close our frequent reference to Saint Paul as a pattern for general imitation, by re-

peating one question illustrative of those opposite qualities which ought to meet in every Christian. If the most zealous advocate of *spiritual influences* were to select, from all the writers of sacred antiquity, the most distinguished champion of his great cause, on whom would he fix his choice? And if the most strenuous asserter of the duty of *personal activity in moral virtue* were to choose from all mankind the man who most completely exemplified this character in himself, where must he search? Would not the two antagonists, when they meet in the field of controversy, each in defence of his favourite tenet, find that they had fixed on the same man,—Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles? If then we propose him as our model, let us not rest till something of the same combination be formed in ourselves.

To this end let us diligently study his epistles, in which the great doctrines of Salvation are amply unfolded, and the mode of its attainment completely detailed. In contemplating the works of this great master of the human mind, we more than perceive, we *feel* their applicableness to all times, places, circumstances, and persons: and this, not only because the Word of Eternal Life is always the same; but because the human heart, which that word reveals to itself, is still the same also. We behold, as in a mirror, the fidelity, we had almost said the identity, of his representation,—face answering to face. We feel that we are personally interested in every feature he delineates. He lets us into the secrets of our own bosoms. He discloses to us the motives of our own conduct. He touches the true springs of right and wrong, lays bare the moral quality of actions, brings every object to the true point of comparison with each other, and all to the genuine standard of the unerring Gospel. By him we are clearly taught that the same deed done from the desire of pleasing God, or the desire of popular favour, becomes as different in the eye of religion, as any two actions in the eye of men.

There we shall see also, that Saint Paul evinced the sincerity of his eternal hopes by constantly preparing himself for their fruition. These hopes shaped his conduct, and moulded his spirit to a resemblance of the state he hoped for: and he best proved his belief that there really was such a state by labouring to acquire the dispositions which might qualify him for its enjoyment. Without this aim, without this effort, without this perseverance, his faith would have been fruitless, his hope delusive, his profession hypocrisy, and his 'preaching vain.'

Let us image to ourselves the Saviour of the world, holding up professing Christians as a living exemplification of his religion; of that religion which he taught by his doctrines, and ratified by his blood. Let us represent him to our imagination as referring to the lives of his followers for the truth of his word. Do we not tremble at such a responsibility? Do we not shrink from such a comparison? Are we not alarmed at the bare idea of bringing reproach on his Gospel, or dishonour on his name?

Christians! why would you wait till you arrive at heaven, before you contribute to the great end of every dispensation,—namely, *that God may be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe?* Even now, something of that assimilation should be taking place, which will be perfected when 'we shall see Him as He is,' and which will never take place if the resemblance begin not here. Beatification is only the finishing of the likenesss. Intuition will only complete the transformation.

CŒLEBS IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

COMPREHENDING

OBSERVATIONS ON DOMESTIC HABITS AND MANNERS, RELIGION AND MORALS.

For not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom.—*Milton.*

PREFACE.

When I quitted home on a little excursion in the spring of this present year, 1808, a thought struck me, which I began to put into immediate execution. I determined to commit to paper any little circumstance that might arise, and any conversations in which I might be engaged, when the subject was at all important, though there might be nothing particularly new or interesting in the discussion thereof.

I fulfilled my intention as occasions arose to furnish me with materials, and on my return to the north, in the autumn of this same year, it was my amusement on my journey to look over and arrange these papers.

As soon as I arrived at my native place, I lent my manuscript to a confidential friend, as the shortest way of imparting to him whatever had occurred to me during our separation, together with my reflections on those occurrences. I took care to keep his expectations low, by apprizing him, that in a tour from my own house in Westmoreland, to the house of a friend in Hampshire,

he must not look for adventures, but content himself with the every day details of common life diversified only by the different habits and tempers of the persons with whom I had conversed.

He brought back my manuscript in a few days, with an earnest wish that I would consent to its publication; assuring me that he was of opinion it might not be altogether useless, not only to young men engaged in the same pursuit with myself, but to the general reader. He obviated all objections arising from my want of leisure, during my present interesting engagements, by offering to undertake the whole business himself, and to release me from any further trouble, as he was just setting out for London, where he proposed passing more time than the printing would require.

Thus I am driven to the stale apology for publishing what perhaps it would have been more prudent to have withheld—*the importunity of friends;* an apology so commonly unfounded, and so repeatedly alleged, from the days of John Faustus to the publication of Cœlebs.

But whether my friend or my vanity had the largest share of influence, I am willing to indulge the hope that a better motive than either friendship or vanity was an operating ingredient in my consent. Be that as it may, I sent him my copy, "*with all its imperfections on its head.*" It was accompanied by a letter, of which the following extract shall conclude these short prefatory remarks:

"I here send you my manuscript, with permission to make what use of it you please. By publishing it I fear you will draw on me the particular censure of two classes of critics. The novel reader will reject it as dull. The religious may throw it aside as frivolous. The one will accuse it of excessive strictness; the other of censurable levity. Readers of the former description must be satisfied with the following brief and general answer—

"Had it been my leading object to have indulged in details that have amusement only for their end, it might not have been difficult to have produced a work more acceptable to the tastes accustomed to be gratified with such compositions. But to entertain that description of readers makes no part of my design.

"The persons with whom I have associated in my excursion, were, principally, though not exclusively, the family of a country gentleman, and a few of his friends—a narrow field, and unproductive of much variety! The generality of these characters move in the quiet and regular course of domestic life. I found them placed in no difficult situations. It was a scene rather favourable to reflection than description. Social intercourse, and not striking events, marked the daily progress of my visit. I had little of pathetic scenes or trying circumstances to work on my own feelings, or, by the relation of them, to work on the feelings of others. My friend's house resembled the reign of some pacific sovereigns. It was the pleasantest to live in, but its annals were not the most splendid to record. The periods which make life happy, do not always render history brilliant.

"Great passions, therefore, and great trials growing out of them, as I did not witness, I have not attempted to delineate. Love itself appears in these pages, not as an ungovernable impulse, but as a sentiment arising out of qualities calculated to inspire attachment in persons under the dominion of reason and religion, brought together by the ordinary course of occurrences, in a private family party.

"The familiar conversations of this little society comprehend a considerable portion of this slender work. The texture of the narrative is so slight, that it barely serves for a ground into which to weave the sentiments and observations which it was designed to introduce.

"It may not be unnecessary to anticipate an objection to which these conversations may sometimes be thought liable. In a few instances, the speeches may be charged with a degree of stiffness, and with a length not altogether consistent with familiar dialogue. I must apologize for this by observing, that when the subjects were serious, the dialogue would not, in every instance, bend to such facilities, nor break into such small parcels, as may easily be effected in the discussion of topics of gayer intercourse.

"But it is time to meet the objections of the more pious reader, if any such should condescend to peruse this little performance. If it be objected, that religious characters have been too industriously brought forward, and their faults somewhat too severely treated, let it be remembered, that while it is one of the principal objects of the work to animadvert on those very faults, it has never been done with the insidious design of depreciating the religion, but with the view, by exposing the fault, to correct the practice. Grossly vicious characters have seldom come in my way, but I had frequent occasion to observe the different shapes and shades of error in various descriptions of society, not only in those worldly persons who do not quite leave religion out of their scheme, but on the mistakes and inconsistencies of better characters, and even on the errors of some who would be astonished not to find themselves reckoned altogether religious. I have not so much animadverted on the unavoidable faults and frailties inseparable from humanity, even in the best characters, and which the best characters most sensibly feel, and most feelingly deplore, as on those errors which are often tolerated, justified, and in some instances systematized.

"If I have been altogether deceived in the ambitious hope that these pages may not be entirely useless; if I have failed in my endeavours to show how religion may be brought to mix with the concerns of ordinary life, without impairing its activity, lessening it cheerfulness, or diminishing its usefulness; if I have erred in fancying that material defects exist in fashionable education; if I have been wrong in supposing that females of the higher class may combine more domestic knowledge with more intellectual acquirement, that they may be at the same time more knowing and more useful, than has always been thought necessary or compatible; in short, if I shall be

found to have totally disappointed you, my friend, in your too sanguine opinion that some little benefit might arise from the publication, I shall rest satisfied with a low and negative merit. I must be contented with the humble hope that no part of these volumes will be found injurious to the important interests, which it was rather in my wish than in my ability to advance; that where I failed in effecting good, little evil has been done: that if my book has answered no valuable purpose, it has at least, not added to the number of those publications, which, by impairing the virtue, have diminished the happiness of mankind: that if I possessed not talents to promote the cause of Christian morals, I possessed an abhorrence of those principles which lead to their contamination.

"CŒLEBS"

CŒLEBS.

CHAP. I.

I HAVE been sometimes surprised, w en in conversation I have been expressing my admiration of the character of Eve in her state of innocence, as drawn from our immortal poet, to hear objections stated by those, from whom, of all critics, I should have least expected it—the ladies. I confess that, as the Sophia of Rousseau had her young imagination captivated by the character of Fenelon's Telemachus, so I early became enamoured of that of Milton's Eve. I never formed an idea of conjugal happiness, but my mind involuntarily adverted to the graces of that finished picture.

The ladies, in order to justify their censure, assert that Milton, a harsh domestic tyrant, must needs be a very inadequate judge, and, of course, a very unfair delineator of female accomplishments. These fair cavillers draw their inference from premises, from which I have always been accustomed to deduce a directly contrary conclusion. They insist that it is highly derogatory from the dignity of the sex, that the poet should affirm that it is the perfection of the character of a wife,

> "To study household good,
> And good works in her husband to promote."

Now according to my notion of 'household good,' which does not include one idea of drudgery or servility, but which involves a large and comprehensive scheme of excellence, I will venture to affirm, that let a woman know what she may, yet if she knows not this, she is ignorant of the most indispensable, the most appropriate branch of female knowledge. Without it, however, she may inspire admiration abroad, she will never excite esteem, nor of course durable affection at home, and will bring neither credit nor comfort to her ill-starred partner.

The domestic arrangements of such a woman as filled the capacious mind of the poet, resembles, if I may say it without profaneness, those of Providence, whose under-agent she was. Her wisdom is seen in its effect. Indeed it is rather felt than seen. It is sensibly acknowledged in the peace, the happiness, the virtue of the component parts; in the order, regularity and beauty of the whole system, of which she is the moving spring. The perfection of her character, as the divine poet intimates, does not arise from a prominent quality, or a showy talent, or a brilliant accomplishment; but it is the beautiful combination and result of them all. Her excellences consist not so much in acts as in habits, in

> Those thousand decencies which daily flow
> From all her words and actions.

A description more calculated than any I ever met with to convey an idea of the purest conduct resulting from the best principles. It gives an image of that tranquillity, smoothness, and quiet beauty, which is of the very essence of perfection in a wife; while the happily chosen verb *flow* takes away any impression of dulness, or stagnant torpor, which the *still* idea might otherwise suggest.

But the offence taken by the ladies against this uncourtly bard, is chiefly occasioned by his having presumed to intimate that conjugal obedience

> Is woman's highest honour and her praise.

This is so nice a point, that I, as a bachelor, dare only just hint, that on this delicate question the poet has not gone an inch farther than the apostle. Nay Paul is still more uncivilly explicit than Milton. If, however, I could hope to bring over to my side critics, who, being of the party, are too apt to prejudge the cause, I would point out to them, that the supposed harshness of the observation is quite done away by the recollection that this scruple 'obedience' is so far from implying degradation, that it is connected with the injunction to the woman 'to promote good works' in her husband; an injunction surely inferring a degree of influence that raises her condition, and restores her to all the dignity of equality; it makes her not only the associate, but the inspirer of his virtues.

But to return to the economical part of the character of Eve. And here she exhibits a consummate specimen and beautiful model of domestic skill and elegance. How exquisitely conceived is her reception and entertainment of Raphael! How modest, and yet how dignified! I am afraid I know some husbands who would have had to encounter very ungracious looks, not to say words, if they had brought home even an angel, *unexpectedly* to dinner Not so our general mother.

> 'Her despatchful looks
> Her hospitable thoughts, ——intent
> What choice to choose for delicacy best,

all indicate not only the 'prompt,' but the cheerful 'obedience.' Though her repast consisted only of the fruits of paradise

Whatever earth, all bearing mother, yields;

Yet of these, with a liberal hospitality,

She gathered tribute large, and on the board,
Heaps with unsparing hand.

The finest modern lady need not disdain the arrangement of her table, which was

So contrived as not to mix
Tastes not well join'd, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste, upheld by kindliest change.

It must, however, I fear, be conceded, by the way, that this 'taste *after* taste' rather holds out an encouragement to second courses.

When this unmatched trio had finished their repast, which, let it be observed, before they tasted, Adam acknowledged that

These bounties from our Nourisher are given,
From whom all perfect good descends,

Milton with great liberality to that sex, against which he is accused of so much severity, obligingly permitted Eve to sit much longer after dinner than most modern husbands would allow. She had attentively listened to all the historical and moral subjects so divinely discussed between the first Angel and the first Man; and perhaps there can scarcely be found a more beautiful trait of a delicately attentive wife, than she exhibits by withdrawing at the exact point of propriety. She does not retire in consequence of any look or gesture, any broad sign of impatience, much less any command or intimation of her husband; but with the ever watchful eye of vigilant affection and deep humility:

When by his countenance he seemed
Entering on thoughts abstruse,

instructed only by her own quick intuition of what was right and delicate, she withdrew. And here again how admirably does the poet sustain her intellectual dignity, softened by a most tender stroke of conjugal affection.

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high—such pleasures she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole auditress——

On perusing, however, the *tete-a-tete*, which her absence occasioned, methinks I hear some sprightly lady, fresh from the Royal Institution, express her wonder why Eve should be banished by her husband from Raphael's fine lecture on astronomy, which follows: was not she as capable as Adam of understanding all he said, of

Cycle and Epicycle, Orb on Orb!

If, however, the imaginary fair objector will take the trouble to read to the end of the eighth book of this immortal work, it will raise in her estimation both the poet and the heroine, when she contemplates the just propriety of her being absent before Adam enters on the account of the formation, beauty, and attractions of his wife, and of his own love and admiration. She will farther observe, in her progress through this divine poem, that the author is so far from making Eve a mere domestic drudge, an unpolished housewife, that he pays an invariable attention even to external elegance in his whole delineation, ascribing grace to her steps, and dignity to her gesture. He uniformly keeps up the same combination of intellectual worth and polished manners;

For softness she, and sweet attractive grace,

And her husband, so far from a churlish insensibility to her perfections, politely calls her

Daughter of God and man, *accomplished* Eve.

I will not, however, affirm that Adam, or even Milton, annexed to the term *accomplished* precisely the idea with which it is associated in the mind of a true modern-bred lady.

If it be objected to the poet's gallantry, that he remarks,

How beauty is excelled by manly grace,
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair;

let it be remembered, that the observation proceeds from the lips of Eve herself, and thus adds to her other graces, the crowning grace of humility.

But it is high time I should proceed from my criticism to myself. The connection, and of course the transition, will be found more natural than may appear, till developed by my slight narrative.

CHAP. II.

I am a young man, not quite four and twenty of an ancient and respectable family, and considerable estate in one of the northern counties. Soon after I had completed my studies in the University of Edinburgh, my father fell into a lingering illness. I attended him with an assiduity which was richly rewarded by the lessons of wisdom, and the example of piety which I daily received from him. After languishing about a year, I lost him, and in him the most affectionate father, the most enlightened companion, and the most Christian friend.

The grief of my mother was so poignant, so lasting, that I could never prevail on myself to leave her even for the sake of attaining those advantages, and enjoying those pleasures, which may be reaped by a wider range of observation, by a more extended survey of the multifarious tastes, habits, pursuits, and characters of general society. I felt with Mr. Gray, that we can never have but one mother, and postponed from time to time the moment of leaving home.

I was her only child, and thought it was now her sole remaining wish to see me happily married, yet I was desirous of first putting myself in a situation which might afford me a more extensive field of inquiry, before I ventured to take so irretrievable a step, a step which might perhaps affect my happiness in both worlds. But time did not hang heavy on my hands; if I had little society, I had many books. My father had left me a copious library, and I had learnt from

him to select whatever was most valuable in that best species of literature, which tends to form the principles, the understanding, the taste, and the character. My father had passed the early part of his life in the gay and busy world; and our domestic society in the country had been occasionally enlivened by visits from some of his London friends, men of some sense and learning, and some of them men of piety.

My mother, when she was in tolerable spirits, was now frequently describing the kind of woman, whom she wished me to marry. 'I am so firmly persuaded, Charles,' would she kindly say, 'of the justness of your taste, and the rectitude of your principles, that I am not much afraid of your being misled by the captivating exterior of any woman who is greatly deficient either in sense or conduct; but remember, my son, that there are many women against whose characters there lies nothing very ojectionable, who are yet little calculated to taste, or to communicate rational happiness. Do not indulge romantic ideas of super-human excellence. Remember that the fairest creature is a fallen creature. Yet let not your standard be low. If it be absurd to expect perfection, it is not unreasonable to expect *consistency*. Do not suffer yourself to be caught by a shining quality, till you know it is not counteracted by the opposite defect. Be not taken in by strictness in one point, till you are assured there is no laxity in others. In character, as in architecture, proportion is beauty. The education of the present race of females is not very favourable to domestic happiness. For my own part, I call education, not that which smothers a woman with accomplishments, but that which tends to consolidate a firm and regular system of character; that which tends to form a friend, a companion, and a wife. I call education, not that which is made up of the shreds and patches of useless arts, but that which inculcates principles, polishes taste, regulates temper, cultivates reason, subdues the passions, directs the feelings, habituates the reflection, trains to self-denial, and, more especially, that which refers all actions, feelings, sentiments, tastes, and passions, to the love and fear of God.'

I as yet had little opportunity of contrasting the charms of my native place with the less wild and romantic beauties of the south. I was passionately fond of the scenery that surrounded me, which had never yet lost that power of pleasing, which it is commonly imagined that novelty can alone confer.

The Priory, a handsome Gothic mansion, stands in the middle of a park, not extensive, but beautifully varied. Behind are lofty mountains, the feet of which are covered with wood that descends almost to the house. On one side a narrow cultivated valley winds among the mountains; the bright variegated tints of its meadows and corn fields, with here and there a little white cottage, embosomed in trees, are finely contrasted with the awful and impassable fells which contain it.

An inconsiderable but impetuous river rushes from the mountains above, through this unadorned but enchanting little valley, and passes through the Park at the distance of about a hundred yards from the house. The ground falls beautifully down to it; and on the other side is a fine wood of birch over-hanging the river, which is here crossed by a small rustic bridge; after being enlarged by many streams from the neighbouring hills, it runs about half a mile to the lake below, which, from the front of the house, is seen in full beauty. It is a noble expanse of water. The mountains that surround it are some of them covered with wood, some skirted with cultivation, some rocky and barren to the water's edge; while the rugged summits of them all present every variety of fantastic outline. Towards the head of the lake a neat little village ornaments the banks, and wonderfully harmonizes with the simple beauty of the scene. At an opening among the hills, a view is caught of the distant country, a wide vale richly wooded, adorned every where with towns, villages, and gentlemen's houses, and backed by sublime mountains, rivalling in height, though not in their broken and Alpine forms, those that more immediately surround us.

While I was thus dividing my time between the enjoyment of this exquisite scenery, my books, the care of my affairs, my filial attention, and my religious duties, I was suddenly deprived of my inestimable mother. She died the death of the righteous.

Addison has finely touched on the singular sort of delicate and refined tenderness of a father for a daughter: but I am persuaded that there is no affection of the human heart more exquisitely pure, than that which is felt by a grateful son towards a mother, who fostered his infancy with fondness, watched over his childhood with anxiety, and his youth with an interest compounded of all that is tender, wise, and pious.

My retirement was now become solitude; the former is, I believe, the best state for the mind of man, the latter almost the worst. In complete solitude the eye wants objects, the heart wants attachments, the understanding wants reciprocation. The character loses its tenderness when it has nothing to love, its firmness when it has none to strengthen it, its sweetness when it has nothing to soothe it, its patience when it meets no contradiction, its humility when it is surrounded by dependants, and its delicacy in the conversation of the uninformed. Where the intercourse is very unequal, society is somewhat worse than solitude.

I had naturally a keen relish for domestic happiness: and this propensity had been cherished by what I had seen and enjoyed in my father's family. Home was the scene in which my imagination had pictured the only delights worthy of a rational, feeling, intellectual, immortal man;

> Sole bliss of Paradise
> Which has surviv'd the fall.

This inclination had been much increased by my father's turn of conversation. He often said to me, 'I know your domestic propensities; and I know, therefore, that the whole colour of your future life will be, in a particular manner, determined by the turn of mind of the woman you may marry.—Were you to live in the busy haunts of men; were you of any profession, or

likely to be engaged in public life, though I would still counsel you to be equally careful in your choice, yet your happiness would not so immediately, so exclusively depend on the individual society of a woman, as that of a retired country gentleman must do. A man of sense, who loves home, and lives at home, requires a wife who can and will be at half the expense of mind necessary for keeping up the cheerful, animated, elegant intercourse which forms so great a part of the bond of union between intellectual and well bred persons. Had your mother been a woman of an uninformed, inelegant mind, virtuous and pious as she is, what abatement must there have been in the blessings of my lot! The *exhibiting*, the *displaying* wife may entertain your company, but it is only the informed, the refined, the cultivated woman who can entertain yourself; and I presume whenever you marry you will marry primarily for yourself, and not for your friends; you will want a *companion:* an *artist* you may hire.

'But remember, Charles, that when I am insisting so much on mental delicacy, I am assuming that all is right in still more essential points. Do not be contented with this superstructure, till you have ascertained the solidity of the foundation. The ornaments which decorate do not support the edifice! Guarded as you are by Christian principles, and confirmed in virtuous habits, I trust you may safely look abroad in the world. Do not, however, irrevocably dispose of your affections till you have made the long promised visit to my earliest, wisest, and best friend, Mr. Stanley. I am far from desiring that your friend should direct your choice. It is what even your father would not do: but he will be the most faithful and most disinterested of counsellors.'

I resolved now for a few months to leave the Priory, the seat of my ancestors, to make a tour not only to London, but to Stanley Grove, in Hampshire, the residence of my father's friend; a visit I was about to make with him just before his last illness. He wished me to go alone, but I could not prevail on myself to desert his sick bed for any scheme of amusement.

I began to long earnestly for the pleasures of conversation, pleasures which, in our small, but social and select circle of cultivated friends, I had been accustomed to enjoy. I am aware that certain fine town-bred men would ridicule the bare mention of learned and polished conversation at a village in Westmoreland, or indeed at any place out of the precincts of the metropolis; just as a London physician, or lawyer, smiles supercilliously at the suggested merits of a professional brother, in a provincial town. Good sense, however, is of all countries, and even knowledge is not altogether a mere local advantage. These, and not the topics of the hour, furnish the best raw materials for working up an improving intercourse.

It must be confessed, however, as I have since found, that to give a terseness and a polish to conversation; for rubbing out prejudices; for correcting egotism; for keeping self-importance out of sight, if not curing it; for bringing a man to condense what he has to say, if he intends to be listened to; for accustoming him to endure opposition; for teaching him not to think every man who differs from him in matters of taste, a fool, and in politics, a knave; for cutting down harangues; for guarding him from producing as novelties and invention what has been said a thousand times; for quickness of allusion, which brings the idea before you without detail or quotation; nothing is equal to the miscellaneous society of London.—The advantages too which it possesses, in being the seat of the court, the parliament, and the courts of law, as well as the common centre of arts and talents of every kind, all these raise it above every other scene of intellectual improvement, or collequial pleasure, perhaps in the whole world.

But this was only the secondary motive of my intended migration. I connected with it the hope, that in a more extended survey, I might be more likely to select a deserving companion for life. 'In such a companion,' said I, as I drove along in my post-chaise, 'I do not want a Helen, a Saint Cecilia, or a Madame Dacier; yet she must be elegant, or I should not love her; sensible, or I should not respect her; prudent, or I could not confide in her; well informed, or she could not educate my children; well bred, or she could not entertain my friends; *consistent*, or I should offend the shade of my mother; pious, or I should not be happy with her, because the prime comfort in a companion for life is the delightful hope that she will be a companion for eternity.

After this soliloquy, I was frightened to reflect that so much was requisite; and yet when I began to consider in which article I could make any abatement, I was willing to persuade myself that my requisitions were moderate.

CHAP. III.

I had occasionally visited two or three families in our county, who were said to make a very genteel appearance on narrow fortunes. As I was known not to consider money as a principal consideration, it had often been intimated to me what excellent wives the daughters of these families would make, because on a very slender allowance their appearance was as elegant as that of women of ten times their expectations. I translated this respectable appearance into a language not the most favourable, as I instantly inferred, and afterwards was convinced, that this personal figure was made by the sacrifice of their whole time to those decorations which procured them credit, by putting their outward figure on a par with the most affluent. If a girl with a thousand pounds rivals in her dress one with ten thousand, is it not obvious, that not only all her time must be employed, but all her money devoted to this one object? Nothing but the clippings and parings from her personal adornments could enable her to supply the demands of charity; and these sacrifices, it is evident she is not disposed to make.

Another inducement suggested to me was, that these young ladies would make better wives,

because they had never been corrupted by the expensive pleasures of London, and had not been spoilt by the gay scenes of dissipation which it afforded. This argument would have weighed powerfully with me, had I not observed that they never abstained from any amusement in the country that came within their reach.

I naturally inferred, that she who eagerly grasped at every petty provincial dissipation, would with increased alacrity have plunged into the more alluring gaieties of the metropolis, had it been in her power. I thought she had even less apology to plead than the town lady; the fault was equal, while the temptation was less; and she who was as dissipated as her limited bounds permitted, where there was little to attract, would, I feared, be as dissipated as she possibly could be, when her temptations were multiplied, and her facilities increased.

I had met with several young ladies of a higher description, daughters of our country gentlemen, a class which furnishes a number of valuable and elegant women. Some of these, whom I knew, seemed unexceptionable in manner and mind. They had seen something of the world, without having been spoilt by it; had read with advantage; and acquitted themselves well in the duties which they had been called to practise. But I was withheld from cultivating that degree of intimacy which would have enabled me to take an exact measure of their minds, by the injunction of my father, that I would never attach myself to any woman till I had seen and consulted Mr. Stanley. This direction, which, like all his wishes was a law to me, operated as a sort of sedative in the slight intercourse I had had with ladies; and resolving to postpone all such intimacy as might have led to attachment, I did not allow myself to come near enough to feel with interest, or to judge with decision.

As soon as I got to town, I visited some of my father's friends. I was kindly received for his sake, and at their houses soon enlarged the sphere of my acquaintance. I was concerned to remark that two or three gentlemen, whom I had observed to be very regular in their attendance on public worship in the country, seldom went to church in London; in the afternoon never. 'Religion,' they said, by way of apology, 'was entirely a thing of example, it was of great political importance; society was held together by the restraints it imposed on the lower orders. When they were in the country it was highly proper that their tenants and workmen should have the benefit of their example, but in London the case was different. When there were so many churches, no one knew whether you went or not, and where no scandal was given, no harm was done. As this was a logic which had not found its way into my father's religion, I was not convinced by it. I remember Mr. Burke, speaking of the English, who were so humane at home, and whom he unjustly accused of wanting humanity in India, says, 'that the humanity of Britain is a humanity of points and parallels.' Surely the religion of the gentlemen in question is not a less geographical distinction.

This error, I conceive, arises from religion being too much considered as an institution of decorum, of convention, of society; and not as an institution founded on the condition of human nature, a covenant of mercy for repairing the evils which sin has produced. It springs from the want of a conviction that Christianity is an individual as well as general concern; that religion is a personal thing, previous to its being a matter of example; that a man is not infallibly saved or lost as a portion of any family, or any church, or any community; but that, as he is individually responsible, he must be individually brought to a deep and humbling sense of his own personal wants, without taking any refuge in the piety he may see around him, of which he will have no benefit if he be no partaker.

I regretted, even for inferior reasons, the little distinction which was paid to this sacred day. To say nothing of the elevating views which the soul acquires from devoting itself to its proper object; the man of business, methinks, should rejoice in its return; the politician should welcome its appearance, not only as a rest from anxiety and labour, but as an occasion of cooling and quieting the mind, of softening its irritation, of allaying its ferment, and thus restoring the repaired faculties of invigorated spirits to the demands of the succeeding week, in a frame of increased aptitude for meeting its difficulties and encountering its duties.

The first person whom I visited was a good natured, friendly man, whom I had occasionally seen in the north. As I had no reason to believe that he was religious in the true sense of the word, I had no intention of looking for a wife in his family. I, however, thought it not amiss to associate a little with persons of different descriptions, that by a wider range I might learn to correct my general judgment, as well as to guide my particular pursuit. Nothing, it is true, would tempt me to select a woman on whose pious disposition I could not form a reasonable dependance; yet to come at the reality of those dispositions was no easy matter.

I had heard my father remark, that he had, more than once, known a right-minded girl, who seemed to have been first taught of heaven, and afterwards supported in her Christian course, under almost every human disadvantage; who boldly, but meekly, maintained her own principles, under all the hourly temptations and opposition of a worldly and irreligious family, and who had given the best evidences of her piety towards God, by her patient forbearance towards her erring friends. Such women had made admirable wives when they were afterwards transplanted into families where their virtues were understood, and their piety cherished. While, on the other hand, he had known others, who accustomed from childhood to the sober habits of family religion, under pious but injudicious parents, had fallen in mechanically with the domestic practices, without having ever been instructed in Christian principles, or having ever manifested any religious tendencies. The implantation of a new principle never having been inculcated, the religious habit has degenerated into a mere form, the parents acting as if they thought that religion must come by nature or

infection in a religious family. The girls having never had their own hearts impressed, nor their own characters distinctly considered nor individually cultivated, but being taken out as a portion from the mass, have afterwards taken the cast and colour of any society into which they have happened to be thrown; and they who had lived religiously with the religious, have afterwards assimilated with the gay and dissipated, when thus thrown into their company, as cordially as if they had never been habituated to better things.

At dinner there appeared two pretty looking young ladies, daughters of my friend, who had been sometime a widower. I placed myself between them, for the purpose of prying a little into their minds, while the rest of the company were conversing on indifferent subjects. Having formerly heard this gentleman's deceased wife extolled as the mirror of managers, and the arrangements of his table highly commended, I was surprised to see it so ill appointed, and every thing wearing marks of palpable inelegance. Though no epicure, I could not forbear observing that many of the dishes were out of season, ill chosen, and ill dressed.

While I was puzzling my head for a solution, I recollected that I had lately read in a most respectable periodical work, a paper (composed, I believe, however, by a raw recruit of that well disciplined corps) which insisted that nothing tended to make the ladies so useless and inefficient in the *menage* as the study of the dead languages. I jumped to the conclusion, and was in an instant persuaded that my young hostesses must not only be perfect mistresses of Latin, but the *tout ensemble* was so ill arranged as to induce me to give them credit for Greek also.

Finding, therefore, that my appetite was baulked, I took comfort in the certainty that my understanding would be well regaled; and after secretly regretting that learning should so effectually destroy usefulness, I was resolved to derive intellectual comfort from this too classical repast. Turning suddenly to the eldest lady, I asked her at once if she did not think Virgil the finest poet in the world. She blushed, and thus confirmed me in the opinion that her modesty was equal to her erudition. I repeated my question with a little circumlocution. She stared, and said she had never heard of the person I mentioned, but that she had read Tears of Sensibility, and Rosa Matilda, and Sympathy of Souls, and Too Civil by Half, and the Sorrows of Werter, and the Stranger, and the Orphan of Snowden.

'Yes, Sir,' joined in the younger sister, who did not rise to so high a pitch of literature, 'and we have read Perfidy Punished, and Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy, and the Fortunate Footman, and the Illustrious Chambermaid.' I blushed and stared in my turn; and here the conversation, through the difficulty of our being intelligible to each other, dropped; and I am persuaded that I sunk much lower in their estoem for not being acquainted with their favourite authors, than they did in mine for never having heard of Virgil.

I arose from the table with a full conviction that it is very possible for a woman to be totally ignorant of the ordinary but indispensable duties of common life, without knowing one word of Latin; and that her being a bad companion is no infallible proof of her being a good economist.

I am afraid the poor father saw something of my disappointment in my countenance, for when we were alone in the evening, he observed that a heavy addition to his other causes of regret for the loss of his wife, was her excellent management of his family. I found afterwards that though she had brought him a great fortune, she had a very low education. Her father, a coarse country Squire, to whom the pleasures of the table were the only pleasures for which he had any relish, had no other ambition for his daughter but that she should be the most famous housewife in the country. He gloried in her culinary perfections, which he understood; of the deficiencies of her mind he had not the least perception. Money and good eating, he owned, were the only things in life, which had a real intrinsic value; the value of all other things, he declared, existed in the imagination only.

The poor lady, when she became a mother, and was brought out into the world, felt keenly the deficiencies of her own education. The dread of Scylla, as is usual, wrecked her on Charybdis. Her first resolution, as soon as she had daughters, was that they should *learn every thing*. All the masters who teach things of little intrinsic use were extravagantly paid for supernumerary attendance; and as no one in the family was capable of judging of their improvements, their progress was but slow. Though they were taught much they learnt but little, even of these unnecessary things; and of things necessary they learnt nothing. The well-intentioned mother was not aware that her daughter's education was almost as much calculated to gratify the senses, though in a different way, and with more apparent refinement, as her own had been; and that *mind* is left nearly as much out of the question in making an ordinary artist as in making a good cook.

CHAP. IV.

From my fondness for conversation, my imagination had been early fired with Dr. Johnson's remark that there is no pleasure on earth comparable to the *fine full flow of London talk*. I, who, since I had quitted college, had seldom had my mind refreshed, but with the petty rills and penurious streams of knowledge which country society afforded, now expected to meet it in a strong and rapid current, fertilizing wherever it flowed, producing in abundance the rich fruits of argument, and the gay flowers of rhetoric. I look for an uninterrupted course of profit and delight. I flattered myself that every dinner would add to my stock of images; that every debate would clear up some difficulty, every discussion elucidate some truth; that every allusion would be purely classical, every

sentence abound with instruction, and every period be pointed with wit.

On the tiptoe of expectation I went to dine with Sir John Belfield, in Cavendish-square. I looked at my watch fifty times. I thought it would never be six o'clock. I did not care to show my country-breeding, by going too early to incommode my friend, nor my town-breeding, by going too late and spoiling his dinner. Sir John is a valuable, elegant minded man, and, next to Mr. Stanley, stood highest in my father's esteem for his mental accomplishments and correct morals. As I knew he was remarkable for assembling at his table men of sense, taste, and learning, my expectations of pleasure were very high. 'Here at least,' said I, as I heard the name of one clever man announced after another, 'here, at least, I cannot fail to find.

The feast of reason and the flow of soul:

Here at least all the energies of my mind will be brought into exercise. From this society I shall carry away documents for the improvement of my taste; I shall treasure up hints to enrich my understanding, and collect aphorisms for the conduct of life.'

At first there was no fair opportunity to introduce any conversation beyond the topics of the day, and to those, it must be confessed, this eventful period gives a new and powerful interest. I should have been much pleased to have had my country politics rectified, and any prejudices, which I might have contracted, removed, or softened, could the discussion have been carried on without the frequent interruption of the youngest man in the company. This gentleman broke in on every remark, by descanting successively on the merits of the various dishes; and if it be true that experience only can determine the judgment, he gave proof of that best right to peremptory decision, by not trusting to delusive theory, but by actually eating of every dish at table.

His animadversions were uttered with the gravity of a German philosopher, and the science of a French cook. If any of his opinions happened to be controverted, he quoted, in confirmation of his own judgment, *l' Almanac des Gourmands*, which he assured us was the most valuable work that had appeared in France since the Revolution.—The author of this book he seemed to consider of as high authority in the science of eating, as Coke or Hale in that of jurisprudence, or Quintilian in the art of criticism. To the credit of the company, however, be it spoken, he had the whole of this topic to himself. The rest of the party were, in general of quite a different caliber, and as little acquainted with his favourite author, as he probably was with theirs.

The lady of the house was perfectly amiable and well bred. Her dinner was excellent; and every thing about her had an air of elegance and splendour: of course she completely escaped the disgrace of being thought a scholar, but not the suspicion of having a very good taste. I longed for the removal of the cloth, and was eagerly anticipating the pleasure and improvement which awaited me.

As soon as the servants were beginning to withdraw, we got into a sort of attitude of conversation; all except the eulogist of l'Almanac des Gourmands, who, wrapping himself up in the comfortable consciousness of his own superior judgment, and a little piqued that he had found neither support nor opposition, (the next best thing to a profound talker,) he seemed to have a perfect indifference to all topics except that on which he has shown so much eloquence, with so little effect.

The last tray was now carried out, the last lingering servant had retired. I was beginning to listen with all my powers of attention to an ingenious gentleman who was about to give an interesting account of Egypt, where he had spent a year, and from whence he was lately returned. He was just got to the catacombs,

When on a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,

the mahogany folding doors, and in at once, struggling who should be first, rushed half a dozen children, lovely, fresh, gay, and noisy. This sudden and violent irruption of the pretty barbarians necessarily caused a total interruption of conversation. The sprightly creatures ran round the table to choose where they would sit. At length this great difficulty of courts and cabinets, *the choice of places*, was settled. The little things were jostled in between the ladies, who all contended who should get possession of the *little beauties*. One was in raptures with the rosy cheeks of a sweet little girl she held in her lap. A second exclaimed aloud at the beautiful lace with which the frock of another was trimmed, and which she was sure mamma had given her for being good. A profitable, and doubtless a lasting and inseparable association, was thus formed in the child's mind between lace and goodness. A third cried out, 'Look at the pretty angel!—do but observe—her bracelets are as blue as her eyes. Did you ever see a match?' 'Surely, lady Bedfield,' cried a fourth, 'you carried the eyes to the shop, or there must have been a shade of difference.' I myself, who am passionately fond of children, eyed the sweet little rebels with complacency, notwithstanding the unseasonableness of their interruption.

At last, when they were all disposed of, I resumed my inquiries about the resting place of the mummies. But the grand dispute, who should have oranges, and who should have almonds and raisins, soon raised such a clamour that it was impossible to hear my Egyptian friend. This great contest was, however, at length settled, and I was returning to the antiquities of Memphis, when the important point, who should have red wine, and who should have white, who should have half a glass, and who a whole one, set us again in an uproar. Sir John was visibly uneasy, and commanded silence. During this interval of peace, I gave up the catacombs, and took refuge in the pyramids. But I had no sooner proposed my question about the serpent said to be found in one of them, than the son and heir, a fine little fellow, just six years old, reaching out his arm to dart an apple across the table at his sister, roguishly intending to overset her glass, unluckily over-

threw his own, brimful of port wine. The whole contents were discharged on the elegant drapery of a white robed nymph.

All was now agitation and distress, and disturbance and confusion; the gentlemen ringing for napkins, the ladies assisting the dripping fair one; each vying with the other who should recommend the most approved specific of getting out the stain of red wine, and comforting the sufferer by stories of similar misfortunes. The poor little culprit was dismissed, and all difficulties and disasters seemed at last surmounted. But you cannot heat up again an interest which has been so often cooled. The thread of conversation had been so frequently broken, that I despaired of seeing it tied together again. I sorrowfully gave up catacombs, pyramids, and serpents, and was obliged to content myself with a little desultory chat with my next neighbour; sorry and disappointed to glean only a few scattered ears, where I had expected so abundant a harvest; and the day from which I had promised myself so much benefit and delight, passed away with a very slender acquisition of either.

CHAP. V.

I WENT almost immediately after, at the invitation of Mr. Ranby, to pass a few days at his villa at Hampstead. Mr. and Mrs. Ranby were esteemed pious persons, but having risen to great affluence by a sudden turn of fortune in a commercial engagement, they had a little self-sufficiency, and not a little disposition to ascribe an undue importance to wealth. This I should have thought more pardonable under their circumstances, had I not expected that religion would in this respect have more than supplied the deficiencies of education. Their religion, however, consisted almost exclusively in a disproportionate zeal for a very few doctrines. And though they were far from being immoral in their own practice, yet, in their discourse, they affected to undervalue morality.

This was, indeed, more particularly the case with the lady, whose chief object of discourse seemed to be, to convince me of her great superiority to her husband in polemical skill. Her chaste conversation certainly was not coupled with fear. In one respect she was the very reverse of those Pharisees who were scrupulously exact about their petty observances. Mrs. Ranby was, on the contrary, anxious about a very few important particulars, and exonerated herself from the necessity of all inferior attentions. She was strongly attached to one or two preachers, and discovered little candour for all others, or for those who attended them. Nay, she somewhat doubted of the soundness of the faith of her friends and acquaintance, who would not incur great inconvenience to attend one or other of her favourites.

Mrs. Ranby's table was 'more than hospitably good.' There was not the least suspicion of Latin here. The eulogist of female ignorance might have dined in comfortable security against the intrusion and vanity of erudition. She had three daughters, not unpleasing young women. But I was much concerned to observe, that they were not only dressed to the very extremity of the fashion, but their drapery was as transparent, as short, and as scanty; there was as sedulous a disclosure of their persons, and as great a redundancy of ornaments, as I had seen in the gayest circles.

'Expect not perfection,' said my good mother, 'but look for *consistency*.' This principle my parents had not only taught me in the closet, but had illustrated by their deportment in the family and in the world. They observed a uniform correctness in their general demeanor. They were not over anxious about character for its own sake, but they were tenderly vigilant not to bring any reproach on the Christian name by imprudence, negligence, or inconsistency, even in small things. 'Custom,' said my mother, 'can never alter the immutable nature of right; fashion can never justify any practice which is improper in itself; and to dress indecently is as great an offence against purity and modesty, when it is the fashion, as when it is obsolete. There should be a line of demarcation somewhere. In the article of dress and appearance, Christian mothers should make a stand. They should not be so unreasonable as to expect that a young girl will of herself have courage to oppose the united temptations of fashion without, and the secret prevalence of corruption within; and authority should be called in where admonition fails.'

The conversation after dinner took a religious turn. Mrs. Ranby was not unacquainted with the subject, and expressed herself with energy on many serious points. I could have been glad, however, to have seen her views a little more practical, and her spirit a little less censorious. I saw she took the lead in debate, and that Mr. Ranby submitted to act as subaltern; but whether his meekness was the effect of piety or fear, I could not at that time determine. She protested vehemently against all dissipation, in which I cordially joined her, though I hope with something less intemperance of manner, and less acrimony against those who pursued it. I began, however, to lose sight of the errors of the daughters' dress in the pleasure I felt at conversing with so pious a mother of a family. For pious she really was, though her piety was a little debased by coarseness, and not a little disfigured by asperity.

I was sorry to observe that the young ladies not only took no part in the conversation, but that they did not even seem to know what was going on; and I must confess the *manner* in which it was conducted was not calculated to make the subject interesting. The girls sat jogging and whispering each other, and got away as fast as they could.

As soon as they were withdrawn—'There, sir,' said the mother, 'are three girls who will make excellent wives.—They never were at a ball or a play in their lives; and yet, though I say it, who should not say it, they are as highly accomplished as any ladies at St. James's.' I cordially approved the former part of her assertion, and bowed in silence to the latter.

I took this opportunity of inquiring what had been her mode of religious instruction for her

daughters; but though I put the question with much caution and deference, she looked displeased, and said that she did not think it necessary to do a great deal in that way; all these things must come from above; it was not human endeavours, but divine grace which made Christians. I observed, that the truth appeared to be, that divine grace *blessing* human endeavours, seemed most likely to accomplish that great end. She replied, that experience was not on my side, for that the children of religious parents were not always religious. I allowed that it was too true. I knew she drew her instances from two or three of her own friends, who, while they discovered much earnestness about their own spiritual interests, had almost totally neglected the religious cultivation of their children; the daughters in particular had been suffered to follow their own devices, and to waste their days in company of their own choosing, and in the most frivolous manner. 'What do ye more than others?' is an interrogation which this negligence has frequently suggested. Nay, professing serious piety, if ye do not more than those who profess it not, ye do less.

I took the liberty to remark, that though there was no such thing as hereditary holiness, no entail of goodness; yet the Almighty had promised in the scriptures many blessings to the offspring of the righteous. He never meant, however, that religion was to be transferred arbitrarily like an heir-loom; but the promise was accompanied with conditions and injunctions. The directions were express and frequent, to inculcate early and late the great truths of religion; nay, it was enforced with all the minuteness of detail, 'precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little'—at all times and seasons, 'walking by the way, and sitting in the house.' I hazarded the assertion, that it would *generally* be found that where the children of pious parents turned out ill, there had been some mistake, some neglect, or some fault on the part of the parents; that they had not used the right methods. I observed that I thought it did not at all derogate from the sovereignty of the Almighty, that he appointed certain means to accomplish certain ends; and that the adopting these in conformity to his appointment, and dependence on his blessing, seemed to be one of the cases in which we should prove our faith by our obedience.

I found I had gone too far—she said, with some warmth, that she was not wanting in any duty to her daughters; she set them a good example, and she prayed daily for their conversion. I highly commended her for both, but risked the observation, 'that praying without instilling principles, might be as inefficacious as instruction without prayer. That it was like a husbandman, who should expect that praying for sunshine, should produce a crop of corn in a field where not one grain had been sown. God, indeed, *could* effect this, but he does not do it; and the means being of his own appointment, his omnipotence is not less exerted, by his directing certain effects to follow certain causes, than it would by any arbitrary act.' As it was evident that she did not choose to quarrel with me, she contented herself with saying coldly, that she perceived I was a *legalist*, and had but a low view of divine things.

At tea I found the young ladies took no more interest in the conversation than they had done at dinner, but sat whispering and laughing, and netting white silk gloves, till they were summoned to the harpsichord. Despairing of getting on with them in company, I proposed a walk in the garden. I now found them as willing to talk, as destitute of any thing to say. Their conversation was vivid and frivolous. They laid great stress on small things. They seemed to have no shades in their understanding, but used the strongest terms for the commonest occasions, and admiration was excited by things hardly worthy to command attention. They were extremely glad and extremely sorry, on subjects not calculated to excite affections of any kind. They were animated about trifles, and indifferent on things of importance. They were, I must confess, frank and good-natured; but it was evident, that as they were too open, to have any thing to conceal, so they were too uninformed to have any thing to produce; and I was resolved not to risk my happiness with a woman who could not contribute her full share towards spending a wet winter cheerfully in the country.

The next day, all the hours from breakfast to dinner were devoted to the harp. I had the vanity to think that this sacrifice of time was made in compliment to me, as I had professed to like music; till I found that all their mornings were spent in the same manner; and the only fruit of their education, which seemed to be used to any purpose, was, that after their family devotions in the evening, they sung and played a hymn. This was almost the only sign they gave of intellectual or spiritual life. They attended morning prayers, if they were dressed before the bell rang. One morning when they did not appear till late, they were reproved by their father; Mrs. Ranby said, 'she should be more angry with them for their irregularity, were it not that Mr. Ranby obstinately persisted in reading a printed form, which she was persuaded could not do any body much good.' The poor man, who was really well disposed, very properly defended himself, by saying, that he hoped his own heart went along with every word he read; and as to his family, he thought it much more beneficial for them to join in an excellent composition of a judicious divine, than to attend to any such crude rhapsody as he should be able to produce, whose education had not qualified him to lead the devotions of others. I had never heard him venture to make use of his understanding before; and I continued to find it much better than I had at first given him credit for. The lady observed, with some asperity, that where there were *gifts* and *graces*, it superseded the necessity of learning.

In vindication of my own good breeding, I should observe that, in my little debates with Mrs. Ranby, to which I am always challenged by her, I never lost sight of that becoming example of the son of Cato, who, when about to deliver sentiments which might be thought too assuming in so young a man, introduced his admonitions with this modest preface,

Remember what our *father* oft has taught us.

I, without quoting the son of the sage of Utica, constantly adduced the paternal authority for opinions, which might savour too much of arrogance without such a sanction.

I observed in the course of my visit, that self-denial made no part of Mrs. Ranby's religious plan. She fancied, I believe, that it savoured of works, and of works she was evidently afraid. She talked as if activity were useless, and exertion unnecessary, and as if, like inanimate matter, we had nothing to do but to sit still and be shone upon.

I assured her that though I depended on the mercy of God, through the merits of his Son, for salvation, as entirely as she could do, yet I thought that Almighty grace, so far from setting aside diligent exertion, was the principle which promoted it. That salvation is in no part of scripture represented as attainable by the indolent Christian, if I might couple such contradictory terms. That I had been often awfully struck with the plain declarations, 'that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence'—'strive to enter in at the strait gate'—'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'—'give diligence to make your calling sure'—'work out your own salvation.'—To this labour, this watchfulness, this sedulity of endeavour, the crown of life is expressly promised, and salvation is not less the free gift of God, because he has annexed certain conditions to our obtaining it.

The more I argued, the more I found my reputation decline; yet to argue she compelled me. I really believed she was sincere, but she was ill-informed, governed by feelings and impulses, rather than by the plain express rule of scripture. It was not that she did not read scripture, but she interpreted it in her own way; built opinions on insulated texts; did not compare scripture with scripture, except as it concurred to strengthen her bias. She considered with a disproportionate fondness, those passages which supported her peconceived opinions, instead of being uniformly governed by the general tenor and spirit of the sacred page. She had far less reverence for the preceptive than for the doctrinal parts, because she did not sufficiently consider faith as an operative influential principle; nor did she conceive that the sublimest doctrines involve deep practical consequences. She did not consider the government of the tongue, nor the command of her passions, as forming any material part of the Christian character. Her zeal was fiery, because her temper was so; and her charity was cold, because it was an expensive propensity to keep warm. Among the perfections of the Redeemer's character, she did not consider his being 'meek and lowly' as an example, the influence of which was to extend to her. She considered it indeed as *admirable*, but not as *imitable*; a distinction she was very apt to make in all her practical dissertations, and in her interpretation of scripture.

In the evening Mrs. Ranby was lamenting, in general and rather customary terms, her own exceeding sinfulness. Mr. Ranby said, 'You accuse yourself rather too heavily, my dear: 'you have sins, to be sure.' 'And pray what sins have I, Mr. Ranby?' said she, turning upon him with so much quickness that the poor man started. 'Nay,' said he, meekly; 'I did not mean to offend you; so far from it, that hearing you condemn yourself so grievously, I intended to comfort you, and to say that, except a few faults———' 'And pray what faults?' interrupted she, continuing to speak however, lest he should catch an interval to tell them. 'I defy you, Mr. Ranby, to produce one.' 'My dear,' replied he, 'as you charged yourself with all, I thought it would be letting you off cheaply by naming only two or three, such as———.' Here, fearing matters would go too far, I interposed, and softening things as much as I could for the lady, said, 'I conceived that Mr. Ranby meant, that though she partook of the general corruption———' Here Ranby interrupting me with more spirit than I thought he possessed, said, 'General corruption, Sir, must be a source of particular corruption. I did not mean that my wife was worse than other women.' 'Worse, Mr. Ranby, worse?' cried she. Ranby for the first time in his life, not minding her, went on, 'As she is always insisting that the whole species is corrupt, she cannot help allowing that she herself has not quite escaped the infection. Now, to be a sinner in the gross, and a saint in the detail; that is, to have all sins and no faults, is a thing I do not quite comprehend.'

After he had left the room, which he did as the shortest way of allaying the storm, she apologized for him, and said, 'he was a well meaning man, and acted up to the little light he had;' but added, 'that he was unacquainted with religious feelings, and knew little of the nature of conversion.'

Mrs. Ranby, I found, seems to consider Christianity, as a kind of free-masonry, and therefore thinks it superfluous to speak on serious subjects to any but the initiated. If they do not *return the sign*, she gives them up as blind and dead.—She thinks she can only make herself intelligible to those to whom certain peculiar phrases are familiar; and though her friends may be correct, devout, and both doctrinally and practically pious, yet if they cannot catch a certain mystic meaning, if there is not a sympathy of intelligence between her and them, if they do not fully conceive of impressions, and cannot respond to mysterious communications, she holds them unworthy of intercourse with her. She does not so much insist on high moral excellence as the criterion of their worth, as on their own account of their internal feelings.

She holds very cheap that gradual growth in piety which is in reality no less the effect of divine grace, than those instantaneous conversions which she believes to be so common. She cannot be persuaded that, of every advance in piety, of every improvement in virtue, of every illumination of the understanding, of every amendment in the heart, of every ratification of the will, the Spirit of God is no less the author because it is progressive, than if it were sudden It is true, Omnipotence can, when he pleases, still produce these instantaneous effects, as he has sometimes done; but as it is not his established or common mode of operation, it seem

vain and rash, presumptuously to wait for these miraculous interferences. An implicit dependence, however, on such interferences is certainly more gratifying to the genius of enthusiasm, than the anxious vigilance, the fervent prayer, the daily struggle, the sometimes scarcely perceptible, though constant progress of the sober-minded Christian. Such a Christian is fully aware that his heart requires as much watching in the more advanced as in the earliest stages of his religious course. He is cheerful in a well-grounded hope, and looks not for ecstacies, till that hope be swallowed up in fruition. Thankful if he feel in his heart a growing love of God, and an increasing submission to his will, though he is unconscious of visions, and unacquainted with any revelation but that which God has made in his word. He remembers, and he derives consolation from the remembrance, that his Saviour, in his most gracious and soothing invitation to the 'heavy laden,' has mercifully promised 'rest,' but he has no where promised rapture.

CHAP. VI.

But to return to Mrs. Ranby's daughters. Is this *consistency*, said I to myself, when I compared the inanity of the life with the seriousness of the discourse; and contrasted the vacant way in which the day was spent, with the decent and devout manner, in which it was begun and ended? I recollected that under the early though imperfect sacred institution, the fire of the morning and evening sacrifice was never suffered to be extinguished during the day.

Though Mrs. Ranby would have thought it a little heathenish to have had her daughters instructed in polite literature, and to have filled a leisure hour in reading to her a useful book, that was not professedly religious, she felt no compunction at their waste of time, or the trifling pursuits in which the day was suffered to spend itself. The pianoforte, when they were weary of the harp, copying some different drawings, gilding a set of flower pots, and netting white gloves and veils, seemed to fill up the whole business of these immortal beings, of these Christians, for whom it had been solemnly engaged that they should manfully fight under Christ's banner.

On a further acquaintance, I was much more inclined to lay the blame on their education than their dispositions. I found them not only good humoured, but charitably disposed; but their charities were small and casual, often ill applied, and always without a plan. They knew nothing of the state, character, or wants of the neighbouring poor; and it had never been pointed out to them that the instruction of the young and ignorant made any part of the duty of the rich towards them.

When I once ventured to drop a hint on this subject to Mrs. Ranby, she drily said there were many other ways of doing good to the poor, besides exposing her daughters to the probability of catching diseases, and the certainty of getting dirt by such visits. Her subscription was never wanting when she was *quite sure* that the object was deserving. As I suspected that she a little overrated her own charity, I could not forbear observing, that I did not think it demanded a combination of all the virtues to entitle a poor sick wretch to a dinner. And though I durst not quote so light an author as Hamlet to her, I could not help saying to myself, *give every man his due and who shall 'scape whipping?* O! if God dealt so rigidly with us; if he waited to bestow his ordinary blessings till we were good enough to deserve them, who would be clothed? who would be fed? who would have a roof to shelter him?

It was not that she gave nothing away, but she had a great dislike to relieve any but those of her own religious persuasion.—Though her Redeemer laid down his life for all people, nations, and languages, she will only lay down her money for a very limited number of a very limited class. To be religious is not claim sufficient on her bounty; they must be religious in a particular way.

The Miss Ranbys had not been habituated to make any systematic provision for regular charity, or for any of those accidental calamities, for which the purse of the affluent should always be provided: and being very expensive in their persons, they had often not a six-pence to bestow, when the most deserving case presented itself. This must frequently happen when there is no specific fund for charity which should be included in the general arrangement of expenses: and the exercise of benevolence, not be left to depend on the accidental state of the purse. If no new trinket happened to be wanted, these young ladies were liberal to any application, though always without judging of its merits by their own eyes and ears. But if there was a competition between a sick family and a new brooch, the brooch was sure to carry the day. This would not have been the case, had they been habituated to visit themselves the abodes of penury and woe. Their flexible young hearts would have been wrought upon by the actual sight of miseries, the impression of which was feeble when it reached their ears at a distance, surrounded as they were with all the softnesses and accommodations of luxurious life. 'They would do what they could. They hoped it was not so bad as it was represented.' They fell into the usual way of pacifying their consciences by their regrets; and brought themselves to believe that their sympathy with the suffering was an atonement for their not relieving it.

I observed, with concern, during my visit, how little the Christian temper seemed to be considered as a part of the Christian religion. This appeared in the daily concerns of this high professor. An opinion contradicted, a person of different religious views commended, the smallest opposition to her will, the intrusion of an unseasonable visitor, even an imperfection in the dressing of some dish at table: such trifles not only discomposed her, but the discomposure was manifested with a vehemence, which she was not aware was a fault; nor did she seem at all sensible that her religion was ever to be resorted to but on great occasions, forgetting that great occasions but rarely occur in

common life, and that these small passes, at which the enemy is perpetually entering, the true Christian will vigilantly guard.

I observed in Mrs. Ranby one striking inconsistency. While she considered it as forming a complete line of separation from the world, that she and her daughters abstained from public places, she had no objection to their indemnifying themselves for this forbearance, by devoting so monstrous a disproportion of their time to that very amusement which constitutes so principal a part of diversion abroad. The time which is redeemed from what is wrong, is of little value, if not dedicated to what is right; and it is not enough that the doctrines of the gospel furnish a subject for discussion, if they do not furnish a principle of action.

One of the most obvious defects which struck me in this, and two or three other families, whom I afterwards visited, was the want of companionableness in the daughters. They did not seem to form a part of the family compact; but made a kind of distinct branch of themselves. Surely, when only the parents and a few select friends are met together, in a family way, the daughters should contribute their portion to enliven the domestic circle. They were always ready to sing and to play, but did not take the pains to produce themselves in conversation; but seemed to carry on a distinct intercourse, by herding, and whispering, and laughing together.

In some women who seemed to be possessed of good ingredients, they were so ill mixed up together as not to produce an elegant, interesting companion. It appeared to me that three of the grand inducements in the choice of a wife, are, that a man may have a directress for his family, a preceptress for his children, and a companion for himself. Can it be honestly affirmed that the present habits of domestic life are generally favourable to the union of these three essentials? Yet which of them can a man of sense and principle consent to relinquish in his conjugal prospects?

CHAP. VII.

I RETURNED to town at the end of a few days. To a speculative stranger, a *London day* presents every variety of circumstance in every conceivable shape of which human life is susceptible. When you trace the solicitude of the morning countenance, the anxious exploring of the morning paper, the eager interrogation of the morning guest—when you hear the dismal enumeration of losses by land, and perils by sea—taxes trebling, dangers multiplying, commerce annihilating, war protracted, invasion threatening, destruction impending—your mind catches and communicates the terror, and you feel yourself 'falling with a falling state.'

But when, in the course of the very same day, you meet these gloomy prognosticators at the sumptuous, not 'dinner, but hecatomb,' at the gorgeous fete, the splendid spectacle; when you hear the frivolous discourse, witness the luxurious dissipation, contemplate the boundless indulgence, and observe the ruinous gaming you would be ready to exclaim, 'Am I not supping in the Antipodes of that land in which I breakfasted? Surely this is a country of different men, different characters, and different circumstances. This is at least a place in which there is neither fear nor danger, nor want, nor misery, nor war.

If you observe the overflowing subscriptions raised, the innumerable societies formed, the committees appointed, the agents employed, the royal patrons engaged, the noble presidents provided, the palace-like structures erected; and all this to alleviate, to cure, and even to prevent every calamity, which the indigent can suffer, or the affluent conceive; to remove not only want but ignorance; to suppress not only misery but vice, would you not exclaim with Hamlet, 'What a piece of work is man? How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In action how like an angel! In compassion, how like a God!'

If you look into the whole comet-like eccentric orb of the human character; if you compared all the struggling contrariety of principle and of passion; the clashing of opinion and of action, of resolution and of performance; the victories of evil over the propensities to good; if you contrasted the splendid virtue with the disorderly vice; the exalted generosity with the selfish narrowness; the provident bounty with the thoughtless prodigality; the extremes of all that is dignified, with the excesses of all that is abject, would you not exclaim in the very spirit of Pascal, 'O! the grandeur and the littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness of man!'

If you attended the debates in our great deliberative assemblies; if you heard the argument and the eloquence, 'the wisdom and the wit,' the public spirit and the disinterestedness; Curtius's devotedness to his country, and Regulus's disdain of self, expressed with all the logic which reason can suggest, and embellished with all the rhetoric which fancy can supply, would you not rapturously cry out, 'this is

> Above all Greek, above all Roman fame?

But if you discern the bitter personality, the incurable prejudice, the cutting retort, the suspicious implication, the recriminating sneer, the cherished animosity; if you beheld the interests of an empire standing still, the business of the civilized globe suspended, while two intellectual gladiators are thrusting each to give the other a fall, and to show his own strength; would you not lament the littleness of the great, the infirmities of the good, and the weaknesses of the wise? Would you not, soaring a flight far above Hamlet or Pascal, apostrophize with the Royal Psalmist, 'Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou regardest him?'

But to descend to my individual concerns.—Among my acquaintance I visited two separate families, where the daughters were remarkably attractive, and more than usually endowed with beauty, sense, and elegance; but I was deterred from following up the acquaintance, by observing in each family, practices which

though very different, almost equally revolted me.

In one, where the young ladies had large fortunes, they insinuated themselves into the admiration, and invited the familiarity of young men, by attentions the most flattering, and civilities the most alluring. When they had made sure of their aim, and the admirers were encouraged to make proposals, the ladies burst into a loud laugh, wondered what the man could mean; they never dreamt of any thing more than common politeness; then petrified them with distant looks, and turned about to practice the same arts on others.

The other family, in which I thought I had secured an agreeable intimacy, I instantly deserted on observing the gracious and engaging reception given by the ladies to more than one libertine of the most notorious profligacy. The men were handsome, and elegant, and fashionable, and had figured in newspapers and courts of justice. This degrading popularity rather attracted than repelled attention; and while the guilty associates in their crime were shunned with abhorrence by these very ladies, the specious undoers were not only received with complaisance, but there was a sort of competition who should be most strenuous in their endeavours to attract them. Surely women of fashion can hardly make a more corrupt use of influence, a talent for which they will be peculiarly accountable. Surely, mere personal purity can hardly deserve the name of virtue in those who can sanction notoriously vicious characters, which their reprobation, if it could not reform, would at least degrade.

On a further acquaintance, I found Sir John and Lady Belfield to be persons of much worth. —They were candid, generous and sincere. They saw the errors of the world in which they lived, but had not resolution to emancipate themselves from its shackols. They partook, indeed, very sparingly of its diversions, not so much because they suspected their evil tendency, as because they had better resources in themselves.

Indeed, it is wonderful that more people, from mere good sense and just taste, without the operation of any religious consideration, do not, when the first ardour is cooled, perceive the futility of what is called pleasure, and decline it as the man declines the amusements of the child. But fashionable society produces few persons who, like the ex-courtier of King David, assign their four-score years as a reason for no longer 'delighting in the voice of singing men and singing women.'

Sir John and Lady Belfield, however, kept up a large and general acquaintance; and it is not easy to continue to associate with the world, without retaining something of its spirit. Their standard of morals was high, compared with that of those with whom they lived; but when the standard of the gospel was suggested they drew in a little, and thought *things might be carried too far.* There was nothing in their practice which made it their interest to hope that Christianity might not be true. They both assented to its doctrines, and lived in a kind of general hope of its final promises. But their views were neither correct nor elevated. They were contented to generalize the doctrines of scripture, and though they venerated its awful truths in the aggregate, they rather took them upon trust than laboured to understand them, or to imbue their minds with a spirit of them. Many a high professor, however, might have blushed to see how carefully they exercised not a few Christian dispositions; how kind and patient they were! how favourable in their constructions of the actions of others! how charitable to the necessitous! how exact in veracity! and how tender of the reputation of their neighbour!

Sir John had been early hurt by living so much with men of the world, with wits, politicians, and philosophers. This, though he had escaped the contagion of false principles, had kept back the growth of such as were true. Men versed in the world, and abstracted from all religious society, begin, in time, a little to suspect whether their own religious opinions may not possibly be wrong, or at least rigid, when they see them so opposite to those of persons to whose judgment they are accustomed to look up in other points. He found, too, that in the society in which he lived, the reputation of religion detracted much from that of talents, and a man does not care to have his understanding questioned by those in whose opinion he wishes to stand well. This apprehension did not, indeed, drive him to renounce his principles, but it led him to conceal them; and that piety which is forcibly kept out of sight, which has nothing to fortify, and every thing to repel it, is too apt to decline.

His marriage with an amiable woman, whose virtues and graces attached him to his own home, drew him off from the most dangerous of his prior connexions. This union had at once improved his character and augmented his happiness. If Lady Belfield erred, it was through excess of kindness and candour. Her kindness led to the too great indulgence of her children; and her candour to the too favourable construction of the errors of her acquaintance. She was the very reverse of my Hampstead friend. Whereas Mrs. Ranby thought hardly any body would be saved, Lady Belfield comforted herself that hardly any body was in danger. This opinion was not taken up as a palliative to quiet her conscience, on account of the sins of her own conduct, for her conduct was remarkably correct; but it sprung from a natural sweetness of temper, joined to a mind not sufficiently informed and guided by scripture truth. She was candid and teachable, but as she could not help seeing that she had more religion than most of her acquaintance, she felt a secret complacency in observing how far her principles rose above theirs, instead of an humbling conviction of how far her own fell below the requisitions of the gospel.

The fundamental error was, that she had no distinct view of the corruption of human nature. She often lamented the weaknesses and vices of individuals, but thought all vice an incidental not a radical mischief, the effect of thoughtlessness and casual temptation. She talked with discrimination of the faults of some of her chil-

dren; but while she rejoiced in the happier dispositions of others, she never suspected that they had all brought into the world with them a natural tendency to evil; and thought it cruel to suppose that such innocent little things, had any such wrong propensities as education would not effectually cure. In every thing the complete contrast of Mrs. Ranby—as the latter thought education could do nothing, Lady Belfield thought it would do every thing; that there was no good tendency which it would not bring to perfection, and no corruption which it could not completely eradicate. On the operation of a higher influence she placed too little dependence; while Mrs. Ranby rested in an unreasonable trust on an interference not warranted by scripture.

In regard to her children, Lady Belfield was led by the strength of her affection to extreme indulgence. She encouraged no vice in them, but she did not sufficiently check those indications which are the seeds of vice. She reproved the actual fault, but never thought of implanting a principle which might extirpate the evil from whence the fault sprung; so that the individual error and the individual correction were continually recurring.

As Mrs. Ranby, I had observed, seldom quoted any sacred writer but St. Paul, I remarked that Lady Belfield admired almost exclusively Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the historical books of the Bible. Of the Epistles, that of St. James was her favourite; the others she thought chiefly, if not entirely applicable to the circumstances of the Jews and Pagans, to the converts from among whom they were addressed. If she entertained rather an awful reverence for the doctrinal parts, than an earnest wish to study them, it arose from the common mistake of believing that they were purely speculative, without being aware of their deep importance. But if these two ladies were diametrically opposite to each other in certain points, both were frequently right in what they assumed, and both wrong only in what they rejected. Each contended for one half of that which will not save, when disjoined from the other, but which, when united to it, makes up the complete Christian character.

Lady Belfield, who was, if I may so speak, constitutionally charitable, almost thought that heaven might be purchased by charity. She inverted the valuable superstructure of good works, and laid them as her foundation; and while Mrs. Ranby would not perhaps much have blamed Moses for breaking the tables of the law, had he only demolished the second, Lady Belfield would have saved the second as the more important of the two.

Lady Belfield had less vanity than any woman I ever knew, who was not governed by a very strict religious principle. Her modesty never courted the admiration of the world, but her timidity too much dreaded its censure. She would not do a wrong thing to obtain any applause, but she omitted some right ones from the dread of blame.

CHAP. VIII.

The house of Sir John Belfield was become a pleasant kind of home to me. He and his lady seldom went out in an evening. Happy in each other and in their children, though they lived much with the rational, they associated as little as they thought possible with the racketing world. Yet being known to be generally at home, they were exposed to the inroads of certain invaders, called fine ladies, who, always afraid of being too early for their parties, are constantly on the watch, how to disburden themselves, for the intermediate hour, of the heavy commodity *time;* a raw material, which as they seldom work up at home, they are always willing to truck against the time of their more domestic acquaintance. Now, as these last *have* always something to do, it is an unfair traffic; 'all the reciprocity is on one side,' to borrow the expression of an illustrious statesman; and the barter is as disadvantageous to the sober home trader, as that of the honest negroes, who exchange their gold dust and ivory for the beads and bits of glass of the wily English.

These nightly irruptions, though sometimes inconvenient to my friends, were of use to me, as they enabled me to see and judge more of the gay world, than I could have done without going in search of it; a risk, which I thought bore no proportion to the gain. It was like learning the language of the enemy's country at home.

One evening, when we were sitting happily alone in the library. Lady Belfield, working at her embroidery, cheerfully joining in our little discussions, and comparing our peaceful pleasures with those pursued by the occupiers of the countless carriages which were tearing up the 'wheel-worn streets,' or jostling each other at the door of the next house, where a grand assembly was collecting its myriads—Sir John asked what should be the evening book. Then rising, he took down from the shelf Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination.

'Is it,' said he, as soon as he sat down, 'the rage for novelty, or a real degeneracy of taste, that we now so seldom hear of a poet, who, when I was a boy, was the admiration of every man who had a relish for true genius? I cannot defend his principles, since in a work, of which *Man* is professedly the object, he has overlooked his *immortality;* a subject, which one wonders did not force itself upon him, as so congenial to the sublimity of his genius, whatever his religious views might have been. But to speak of him only as a poet; a work, which abounds in a richer profusion of images, and a more varicgated luxuriance of expression than the Pleasures of Imagination, cannot easily be found. The flimsy metre of our day seems to add fresh value to his sinowy verse. We have no happier master of poetic numbers, none who better knew

To build the lofty rhyme.

The condensed vigour, so indispensable to blank verse, the skilful variation of the pause, the masterly structure of the period, and all the occult mysteries of the art, can perhaps be best learnt from Akenside. If he could have conveyed to Thompson his melody and rhythm, and Thompson would have paid him back in perspicuity and transparency of meaning, how they might have enriched each other!'

'I confess,' said I, 'in reading Akenside, I have now and then found the same passage at once enchanting and unintelligible. As it happens to many frequenters of the Opera, the music always transports, but the words are not always understood.' I then desired my friend to gratify us with the first book of the Pleasures of Imagination.

Sir John is a passionate lover of poetry, in which he has a fine taste. He read it with much spirit and feeling, especially these truly classical lines.

Mind, *mind* alone, bear witness earth and heaven,
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime: here hand in hand
Sit paramount the graces; here enthron'd,
Celestial Venus, with divinest airs
Invites the soul to never-fading joy.

'The reputation of this exquisite passage,' said he, laying down the book, 'is established by the consenting suffrage of all men of taste, though by the critical countenance you are beginning to put on, you look as if you had a mind to attack it.'

'So far from it,' said I, 'that I know nothing more splendid in the whole mass of our poetry. And I feel almost guilty of high treason against the majesty of the sublimer Muses, in the remark I am going to hazard, on the celebrated lines which follow. The Poet's object, through this and the two following pages, is to establish the infinite superiority of mind over unconscious matter, even in its fairest forms. The idea is as just as the execution is beautiful: so also is his supreme elevation of intellect, over

Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts.

Nothing again can be finer than his subsequent preference of

The powers of genius and design,

over even the stupendous range

Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres.

He proceeds to ransack the stores of the mental and the moral world, as he had done the world of matter, and with a pen dipped in Hippocrene, opposes to the latter

The charms of virtuous friendship, &c.
* * * * *
The candid blush
Of him who strives with fortune to be just.
* * * * *
All the wild majesty of private life.
* * * * *
The graceful tear that streams from others' woes.

'Why, Charles,' said Sir John, 'I am glad to find you the enthusiastic eulogist of the passage of which I suspected you were about to be the saucy censurer.'

'Censure,' replied I, 'is perhaps too strong a term for any part, especially the most admired part of this fine poem. I need not repeat the lines on which I was going to risk a slight observation; they live in the mind and memory of every lover of the Muses.'

'I will read the next passage, however,' said Sir John, 'that I may be better able to controvert your criticism.'

Look then abroad through nature to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres.
Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,
And speak, oh man! does this capacious scene
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate
Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country hail;
For lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
And Rome again is free!

'What a grand and powerful passage!' said Sir John.

'I acknowledge it,' said I, 'but is it as just as it is grand? *Le vrai est le seul beau.* It is a fair and direct opposition between mind and matter! The poet could not have expressed the image more nobly; but might he not, out of the abundant treasures of his opulent mind, have chosen it with more felicity? Is an act of murder, even of an usurper, as happily contrasted with the organization of matter, as the other beautiful instances I named, and which he goes on to select? The superiority of mental beauty is the point he is establishing, and his elaborate preparation leads you to expect all his other instances to be drawn from pure mental excellence. His other exemplifications are general, this is particular. They are a class, this is only a variety. I question if Milton, who was at least as ardent a champion for liberty, and as much of a party man as Akenside, would have used this illustration. Milton, though he often insinuates a political stroke in his great poem, always, I think, generalizes. Whatever had been his principles, or at whatever period he had written, I question, when he wanted to describe the overthrow of authority by the rebel angels, if he would have illustrated it by Cromwell's seizing the mace, or the decapitation of Charles; much less, if he would have selected these two instances as the triumph of mind over matter.'

'But,' said Sir John, 'you forget that Akenside professedly adopts the language of Cicero in his second philippic.' He then read the note beginning with, Cæsare interfecto, &c.

'True,' said I, 'I am not arguing the matter as a point of fact, but as a point of just application. I pass over the comparison of Brutus with Jove, which by the way would have become Tully better than Akenside, but which Tully would have perhaps thought too bold. Cicero adorns his oration with this magnificent description. He relates it as an event, the other uses it as an illustration of that to which I humbly conceive it does not exactly apply. The orator paints the violent death of a hero; the poet adopts the description of this violent death, or rather of the stroke which caused it, to illustrate the perfection of intellectual grandeur.—After all, it is as much a party question as a poetical one. A question on which the critic will be apt to be guided in his decision, by his politics rather than by his taste. The splendour of the passage, however, will inevitably dazzle the feeling reader, till it produce the common effect of ex

cessive brightness, that of somewhat blinding the beholder.

CHAP. IX.

While we were thus pleasantly engaged, the servant announced Mrs. Fentham; and a fashionable looking woman, about the middle of life, rather youthfully drest, and not far from handsome, made her appearance. Instead of breaking forth into the usual modish jargon, she politely entered into the subject in which she found us engaged; envied lady Belfield the happiness of elegant quiet, which she herself might have been equally enjoying at her own house, and professed herself a warm admirer of poetry. She would probably have professed an equal fondness for metaphysics, geometry, military tactics, or the Arabic language, if she had happened to have found us employed in the study of either.

From poetry the transition to painting was easy and natural. Mrs. Fentham possessed all the phraseology of connoisseurship, and asked me if I was fond of pictures. I professed the delight I took in them in strong, that is, in true terms. She politely said, that Mr. Fentham had a very tolerable collection of the best masters, and particularly a Titian, which she would be happy to have the honour of showing me the next morning. I bowed my thankful assent; she appointed the hour, and soon after, looking at her watch, said she was afraid she must leave the delights of such a select and interesting society for a far less agreeable party.

When she was gone, I expressed my obligations to her politeness, and anticipated the pleasure I should have in seeing her pictures. 'She is much more anxious that you should see her *Originals*,' said Lady Belfield, smiling; 'the kindness is not *quite* disinterested; take care of your heart.' Sir, John, rather gravely, said, 'It is with reluctance that I ever say any thing to the prejudice of any body that I receive into my house; but as the son of my valued friend, I think it fair to tell you that this vigilant matron keeps a keen look-out after all young men of fortune. This is not the first time that that Titian has been made the bait to catch a promising acquaintance. Indeed, it is now grown so stale, that had you not been a new man, she would hardly have risked it. If you had happened not to like painting, some book would have been offered you. The return of a book naturally brings on a visit. But all these devices have not yet answered. The damsels still remain, like Shakespeare's plaintive maid, 'in single blessedness.'—They do not, however, like her, spend gloomy nights

> Chaunting cold hymns to the pale, lifeless moon,

but in singing sprightlier roundelays to livelier auditors.'

I punctually attended the invitation, effectually shielded from danger by the friendly intimation, and a still more infallible Ægis, the charge of my father never to embark in any engagement till I had made my visit to Mr. Stanley. My veneration for his memory operated as a complete defence.

I saw and admired the pictures. The pictures brought on an invitation to dinner. I found Mrs. Fentham to be in her conversation, a sensible, correct, knowing woman. Her daughters were elegant in their figures, well instructed in the usual accomplishments, well bred and apparently well tempered. Mr. Fentham was a man of business, and of the world. He had a great income from a place under government, out of which the expenses of his family permitted him to save nothing. Private fortune he had little or none. His employment engaged him almost entirely, so that he interfered but little with domestic affairs. A general air of elegance, almost amounting to magnificence, pervaded the whole establishment.

I at first saw but little to excite any suspicion of the artificial character of the lady of the house. The first gleam of light which let in the truth was the expressions most frequent in Mrs. Fentham's mouth—'What will the world say?' 'What will people think?' 'How will such a thing appear?' 'Will it have a good look?' 'The world is of opinion.' 'Won't such a thing be censured?' On a little acquaintance I discovered that human applause was the motive of all she said, and reputation her great object in all she did. Opinion was the idol to which she sacrificed. Decorum was the inspirer of her duties, and praise the reward of them. The standard of the world was the standard by which she weighed actions. She had no higher principle of conduct. She adopted the forms of religion, because she saw that, carried to a certain degree, they rather produce credit than censure. While her husband adjusted his accounts on the Sunday morning, she regularly carried her daughters to church, except a head-ache had been caught at the Saturday's opera; and as regularly exhibited herself and them afterwards in Hyde Park. As she said it was Mr. Fentham's leisure day, she complimented him with always having a great dinner on Sundays, but alleged her piety as a reason for not having cards in the evening at home, though she had no scruple to make one at a private party at a friend's house; soberly conditioning, however, that there should not be more than *three tables*, the right or wrong, the decorum or impropriety, the gaiety or gravity always being made specifically to depend on the number of tables.

She was, in general, extremely severe against women who had lost their reputation; though she had no hesitation in visiting a few of the most dishonourable, if they were of high rank, or belonged to a certain set. In that case, she excused herself by saying, 'that as fashionable people continued to countenance them, it was not for her to be scrupulous—One must sail with the stream—I can't set my face against the world.' But if an unhappy girl had been drawn aside, or one who had not rank to bear her out had erred, that altered the case, and she then expressed the most virtuous indignation. When modesty happened to be in repute, not the necks of Queen Elizabeth and her courtly virgins were more entrenched in ruffs and shrouded in tuck

ers, than those of Mrs. Fentham and her daughters; but when *display* became the order of the day, the Grecian Venus was scarcely more unconscious of a veil.

With a very good understanding she never allowed herself one original thought, or one spontaneous action. Her ideas, her language, and her conduct, were entirely regulated by the ideas, language, and conduct of those who stood well with the world. Vanity in her was a steady, inward, but powerfully pervading principle. It did not evaporate in levity or indiscretion, but was the hidden though forcible spring of her whole course of action. She had all the gratification which vanity affords in secret, and all the credit which its prudent operation procures in public. She was apparently guilty of no excess of any kind. She had a sober scale of creditable vices, and never allowed herself to exceed a few stated degrees in any of them. She reprobated gaming, but could not exist without cards. Masquerades she censured as highly extravagant and dangerous, but when given by ladies of high quality, at their own houses, she thought them an elegant and proper amusement. Though she sometimes went to the play, she did not care for what passed on the stage, for she confessed the chief pleasure the theatre afforded, was to reckon up, when she came home, how many dutchesses and countesses had bowed to her across the house.

A complete despot at home, her arbitrariness is so veiled by correctness of manner, and studied good breeding, that she obtains the credit of great mildness and moderation. She is said not to love her daughters who come too near her in age, and go too much beyond her in beauty to be forgiven; yet like a consummate politician, she is ever labouring for their advancement. She has generally several schemes in hand, and always one scheme under another, the under plot ready to be brought forward if the principal one fails. Though she encourages pretenders, yet she is afraid to accept of a tolerable proposal, lest a better should present itself: but if the loftier hope fails, she then contrives to lure back the inferior offer. She can balance to a nicety, in the calculation of chances, the advantages or disadvantages of a higher possibility against a lower probability.

Though she neither wants reading nor taste, her mind is never sufficiently disengaged to make her an agreeable companion. Her head is always at work, conjecturing the event of every fresh ball and every new acquaintance. She cannot even

> Take her tea without a stratagem.

She set out in life with a very slender acquaintance, and clung for a while to one or two damaged peeresses, who were not received by women of their own rank. But I am told it was curious to see with what adroitness she could extricate herself from a disreputable acquaintance, when a more honourable one stepped in to fill the niche. She made her way rapidly by insinuating to one person of note how intimate she was with another, and to both what handsome things each said of the other. By constant attentions, petty offices, and measured flattery she has got footing into almost every house of distinction. Her decorum is invariable. She boasts that she was never guilty of the indecency of violent passion. Poor woman! she fancies there is no violent passion but that of anger. Little does she think that ambition, vanity the hunger of applause, a rage for being universally known, are all violent passions, however modified by discretion, or varnished by art. She suffers too, all that 'vexation of spirit' which treads on the heels of 'vanity.' Disappointment and jealousy poison the days devoted to pleasure. The party does not answer. The wrong people never stay away, and the right ones never come. The guest for whom the fete is made is sure to fail. Her party is thin, while that of her competitor overflows; or there is a plenty of dowagers and a paucity of young men. When the costly and elaborate supper is on the table, excuses arrive: even if the supper is crowded the daughters remain upon hands. How strikingly does she exemplify the strong expression of—'labouring in the fire for very vanity'—'of giving her money for that which is not bread, and her labour for that which satisfieth not!'

After spending the day at Mrs. Fentham's I went to sup with my friends in Cavendish square. Lady Belfield was impatient for my history of the dinner. But Sir John said, laughing, 'You shall not say a word, Charles—I can tell how it was as exactly as if I had been there. Charlotte, who has the best voice, was brought out to sing, but was placed a little behind, as her person is not quite perfect; Maria, who is the most picturesque figure, was put to *attitudinize* at the harp, arrayed in the costume, and assuming the fascinating graces of Marmion's Lady Heron:

> Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
> The strings her fingers flew.

Then, Charles, was the moment of peril! then, according to your favourite Milton's most incongruous image,

> You took in sounds that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of death.

For fear, however, that your heart of adamant should hold out against all these perilous assaults, its vulnerability was tried in other quarters. The Titian would naturally lead to Lavinia's drawings. A beautiful sketch of the lakes would be produced, with a gentle intimation, what a sweet place Westmoreland must be to live in! When you had exhausted all proper raptures on the art and on the artist, it would be recollected, that as Westmoreland was so near Scotland, you would naturally be fond of a reel. The reel of course succeeded.' Then, putting himself into an attitude, and speaking theatrically, he continued

> 'Then universal Pan,
> Knit with the graces and the hours in dance—,

Oh! no, I forget, universal Pan could not join: but he could admire. Then all the perfections of all the nymphs burst on you in full blaze.

Such a concentration of attractions you could never resist! You are *but* a man, and now doubtless a lost man.' Here he stopped to finish his laugh, and I was driven reluctantly to acknowledge that his picture, though a carricature, was, notwithstanding, a resemblance.

'And so,' said Sir John, 'you were brought under no power of incantation, by this dangerous visit. You will be driven, like the tempted Ithican. to tie yourself to a mast, or flee for safety from the enchantment of these Syrens.'

While we were at supper, with more gravity, he said, 'Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which brings less accession to its comfort, than an unceasing struggle to rise to an elevation in society very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any stronger ascending power than mere vanity. Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural tendency to rise, and to lift their possessor. The flame, in mounting, does but obey its impulse. But when there is no energy more powerful than the passion to be great, destitute of the gifts which confer greatness, the painful efforts of ambition are like water, forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires constant exertions of art, to keep up what art at first set a-going. Poor Mrs. Fentham's head is perpetually at work to maintain the elevation she has reached. And how little, after all, is she considered by those on whose caresses her happiness depends! She has lost the esteem of her original circle, where she might have been respected, without gaining that of her high associates, who, though they receive her, still refuse her claims of equality. She is not considered as of their *establishment*, it is but *toleration* at best.'

At Mrs. Fentham's I encountered Lady Bab Lawless, a renowned modish dowager, famous for laying siege to the heart of every distinguished man, with the united artillery of her own wit and her daughter's beauty. How many ways there are of being wrong! She was of a character diametrically opposite to that of Mrs. Fentham. She had the same end in view, but the means she used to accomplish it were of a bolder strain. Lady Bab affected no delicacy, she laughed at reserve, she had shaken hands with decorum.

She held the *noisy* tenor of her way,

with no assumed refinement; and, so far from shielding her designs behind the mask of decency, she disdained the obsolete expedient. Her plans succeeded the more infallibly, because her frankness defeated all suspicion. A man could never divine that such gay and open assaults could have their foundation in design, and he gave her full credit for artless simplicity, at the moment she was catching him in her toils. If she now and then had gone too far, and by a momentary oversight or excessive levity had betrayed too much, with infinite address she would make a crane-neck turn, and fall to discussing, not without ability, some moral or theological topic. Thus she affected to establish the character of a woman thoughtless through wit, indiscreet through simplicity, but religious on principle.

As there is no part of the appendage to a wife, which I have ever more dreaded than a Machiavelian mother, I should have been deaf to wit and blind to beauty, and dead to advances, had their united batteries been directed against me. But I had not the ambition to aspire to that honour. I was much too low a mark for her lofty aim. She had a natural antipathy to every name that could not be found in the red book. She equally shrunk from untitled opulence and indigent nobility. She knew by instinct if a younger son was in the room, and by a petrifying look checked his most distant approaches; while with her powerful spells, she never failed to draw within her magic circle the splendid heir, and charm him to her purpose.

Highly born herself, she had early been married to a rich man of inferior rank, for the sake of a large settlement. Her plan was, that her daughters (who, by the way, are modest and estimable) should find in the man they married, still higher birth than her own, and more riches than her husband's.

It was a curious speculation to compare these two friends, and to observe how much less the refined manœuvres of Mrs. Fentham answered, than the open assaults of the intrepid Lady Bab. All the intricacies and labyrinths which the former had been so skilful and so patient in weaving, have not yet enthralled one captive; while the composed effrontery, the affecting to take for granted the offer which was never meant to be made, and treating that as concluded, which was never so much as intended, drew the unconscious victim of the other into the trap, before he knew it was set; the depth of her plot consisting in not appearing to have any. It was a novelty in intrigue. An originality which defied all competition, and in which no imitator has any chance of success.

CHAP. X.

Sir John carried me one morning to call on Lady Denham, a dowager of fashion, who had grown old in the trammels of the world. Though she seems resolved to die in the harness, yet she piques herself on being very religious, and no one inveighs against infidelity or impiety with more pointed censure. 'She has a grand-daughter,' said Sir John, 'who lives with her, and whom she has trained to walk precisely in her own steps, and which, she thinks, *is the way she should go.* 'The girl,' added he, smiling, 'is well looking, and will have a handsome fortune, and I am persuaded that, as my friend, I could procure you a good reception.'

We were shown into her dressing-room, where we found her with a book lying open before her. From a glance which I caught of the large black letter, I saw it was a *Week's Preparation.* This book it seems constantly lay open before her from breakfast till dinner, at this season. It was Passion week. But as this is the room in which she sees all her morning visitors, to none of whom is she ever denied, even at this period of retreat, she could only pick up momentary snatches of reading in the short intervals between one person bowing out

and another courtscying in. Miss Denham sat by, painting flowers.

Sir John asked her Ladyship if she would go and dine in a family way with Lady Belfield. She drew up, looked grave, and said, with much solemnity, that she should never think of dining abroad at this holy season. Sir John said, 'as we have neither cards nor company, I thought you might as well have eaten your chicken in my house as in your own.' But though she thought it a sin to dine with a sober family, she made herself amends for the sacrifice, by letting us see that her heart was brimful of the world, pressed down and running over. She indemnified herself for her abstinence from its diversions, by indulging in the only pleasures which she thought compatible with the sanctity of the season, uncharitable gossip, and unbounded calumny. She would not touch a card for the world, but played over to Sir John the whole game of the preceding Saturday night; told him by what a shameful inattention her partner had lost the odd trick; and that she should not have been beaten after all, had not her adversary, she verily believed, contrived to look over her hand.

Sir John seized the only minute in which we were alone, to ask her to add a guinea to a little sum he was collecting for a poor tradesman with a large family, who had been burnt out a few nights ago. 'His wife,' added he, 'was your favourite maid Dixon, and both are deserving people.'—'Ah, poor Dixon! she was always unlucky,' replied the Lady. 'How could they be so careless? Surely they might have put the fire out sooner. They should not have let it get ahead. I wonder people are not more active.'—'It is too late to inquire about that,' said Sir John; 'the question now is, not how their loss might have been prevented, but how it may be repaired.'—'I am really quite sorry,' said she, 'that I can give you nothing. I have had so many calls lately, that my charity-purse is completely exhausted—and that abominable Property-tax makes me quite a beggar.'

While she was speaking, I glanced on the open leaf at, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be ready to give;' and directing my eye further, it fell on, 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked.' These were the awful passages which formed a part of her *preparation*, and this was the practical use she made of them!

A dozen persons of both sexes 'had their exits and their entrances' during our stay; for the scene was so strange, and the character so new to me, that I felt unwilling to stir. Among other visitors was Signor Squallini, a favourite opera singer, whom she patronized. Her face was lighted up with joy at sight of him. He brought her an admired new air, in which he was preparing himself, and sung a few notes, that she might say she heard it the first. She felt all the dignity of the privilege, and extolled the air with all the phrases, cant, and rapture of *dilettanteism*.

After this, she drew a paper from between the leaves of her still opened book, which she showed him. It contained a list of all the company she had engaged to attend his benefit. 'I will call on some others,' said she, 'to-morrow after prayers; I am sorry this is a week in which I cannot see my friends at their assemblies, but on Sunday you know it will be over, and I shall have my house full in the evening. Next Monday will be Easter, and I shall be at our dear Dutchess's private masquerade, and then I hope to see and engage, the whole world. 'Here are ten guineas,' said she in a half whisper to the obsequious Signor, 'you may mention what I gave for *my* ticket, and it may set the fashion going.' She then pressed a ticket on Sir John and another on me. He declined, saying with great *sang froid*, 'You know we are *Handelians*.' What excuse I made I do not well know; I only know that I saved my ten guineas with a very bad grace, but felt bound in conscience to add them to what I had before subscribed to poor Dixon.

Hitherto I had never seen the gnat-strainer, and the camel-swallower, so strikingly exemplified.—And it is observable how forcibly the truth of Scripture is often illustrated by those who live in the boldest opposition to it. If you have any doubt while you are reading, go into the world, and your belief will be confirmed.

As we took our leave, she followed us to the door, I hoped it was with the guinea for the fire; but she only whispered Sir John, though he did not go himself, to prevail on such and such ladies to go to Squallini's benefit. 'Pray do,' said she, 'it will be charity. Poor fellow! he is sadly out at elbows, he has a fine liberal spirit, and can hardly make his large income do.

When we got into the street we admired the splendid chariot and laced liveries of this *indigent* professor, for whom our charity had been just solicited, and whose 'liberal spirit,' my friend assured me, consisted in sumptuous living, and the indulgence of every fashionable vice.

I could not restrain my exclamations as soon as we got out of hearing. To Sir John the scene was amusing, but to him it had lost the interest of novelty. 'I have known her ladyship about twelve years,' said he, 'and of course have witnessed a dozen of these annual paroxysms of devotion. I am persuaded that she is a gainer by them on her own principle, that is, in the article of pleasure. This short periodical abstinence whets her appetite to a keener relish for suspended enjoyment; and while she fasts from amusements, her blinded conscience enjoys a feast of self-gratulation. She feeds on the remembrance of her self-denial, even after she has returned to those delights which she thinks her retreat has fairly purchased. She considers religion as a system of pains and penalties, by the voluntary enduring of which, for a short time, she shall compound for all the indulgencies of the year.—She is persuaded that something must be annually forborne, in order to make her peace. After these periodical atonements, the Almighty being in her debt, will be obliged at least to pay her with heaven. This composition, which rather brings her in on the creditor side, not only quiets her conscience for the past, but enables her joyfully to enter on a new score.'

I asked Sir John, how Lady Belfield *could* associate with a woman of a character so opposite to her own? 'What can we do?' said he; 'we cannot be singular. We must conform

ittle to the world in which we live.' Trusting to his extreme good nature, and fired at the scene to which I had been a witness, I ventured to observe that non-conformity to such a world as that of which this lady was a specimen, was the very criterion of the religion taught by Him who had declared by way of pre-eminent distinction, that his kingdom was not of this world.'

'You are a young man,' answered he, mildly, 'and this delicacy and these prejudices would soon wear off, if you were to live some time in the world.'—'My dear Sir John,' said I, warmly, 'by the grace of God, I never *will* live in the world; at least, I will never associate with that part of it, whose society would be sure to wear off that delicacy and remove those prejudices. Why this is retaining all the worst part of popery.—Here is the abstinence without the devotion; the outward observance without the interior humiliation; the suspending of sin, not only without any design of forsaking it, but with a fixed resolution of returning to it, and of increasing the gust by the forbearance. Nay the sins she retains in order to mitigate the horrors of forbearance, are as bad as those she lays down. A postponed sin, which is fully intended to be resumed, is as much worse than a sin persisted in, as deliberate hypocrisy is worse than the impulse of passion. I desire not a more explicit comment on a text, which I was once almost tempted to think unjust; I mean, the greater facility of the entrance of gross and notorious offenders into heaven than of these formalists. No! if Miss Denham were sole heiress to Crœsus, and joined the beauty of Cleopatra to the wit of Sappho, I never would connect myself with a disciple of that school.'

'How many ways there are of being unhappy!' said Sir John, as we returned one day from a ride we had taken some miles out of town, to call on a friend of his. 'Mr. Stanhope, whom we have just quitted, is a man of great elegance of mind. His early life was passed in liberal studies, and in the best company. But his fair prospects were blasted by a disproportionate marriage. He was drawn in by a vanity too natural to young men, that of fancying himself preferred by a woman who had no one recommendation but beauty. To be admired by her whom all his acquaintance admired, gratified his *amour propre*. He was overcome by her marked attentions so far as to declare himself, without knowing her real disposition. It was some time before his prepossession allowed him to discover that she was weak and ill-informed, selfish and bad tempered. What she wanted in understanding, she made up in spirit. The more she exacted, the more he submitted; and her demands grew in proportion to his sacrifices. My friend, with patient affection, struggled for a long time to raise her character, and to enlighten her mind; but finding that she pouted whenever he took up a book, and that she even hid the newspaper before he had read it, complaining that he preferred any thing to her company; the softness of his temper and his habitual indolence at length prevailed. His better judgment sunk in the hopeless contest. For a quiet life, he has submitted to a disgraceful life. The compromise has not answered. He has incurred the degradation which, by a more spirited conduct, he might have avoided, and has missed the quiet which he sacrificed his dignity to purchase. He compassionates her folly, and continues to translate her wearisome interruptions into the flattering language of affection.

In compliment to her, no less than in justification of his own choice, he has persuaded himself that all women are pretty much alike. That in point of capacity, disposition, and knowledge, he has but drawn the common lot, with the balance in his favour, of strong affection and unsullied virtue. He hardly ever sees his fine library, which is the object of her supreme aversion, but wastes his days in listless idleness, and his evenings at cards, the only thing in which she takes a lively interest.—His fine mind is, I fear, growing mean and disingenuous. The gentleness of his temper leads him not only to sacrifice his peace, but to infringe on his veracity in order to keep her quiet.

'All the entertainment he finds at dinner, is a recapitulation of the faults of her maids, or the impertinence of her footmen, or the negligence of her gardener. If to please her he joins in the censure, she turns suddenly about, and defends them. If he vindicates them, she insists on their immediate dismission; and no sooner are they irrevocably discharged, than she is continually dwelling on their perfection, and then it is only their successors who have any faults.

He is now so afraid of her driving out his few remaining old servants, if she sees his partiality for them, that in order to conceal it, he affects to reprimand them as the only means for them to secure her favour. Thus the integrity of his heart is giving way to a petty duplicity, and the openness of his temper to shabby artifices. He could submit to the loss of his comfort, but sensibly feels the diminution of his credit. The loss of his usefulness too is a constant source of regret. She will not even suffer him to act as a magistrate, lest her doors should be beset with vagabonds, and her house dirtied by men of business. If he chance to commend a dish he has tasted at a friend's house—Yes, every body's things are good but her's—she can never please; he had better always dine abroad, if nothing is fit to be eaten at home.

'Though poor Stanhope's conduct is so correct, and his attachment to his wife so notorious, he never ventures to commend any thing that is said or done by another woman. She has, indeed, no definite object of jealousy, but feels an uneasy, vague sensation of envy at any thing or person he admires. I believe she would be jealous of a fine day, if her husband praised it.

'If a tale reaches her ears of a wife who has failed of her duty, or if the public papers record a divorce, then she awakens her husband to a sense of his superior happiness, and her own irreproachable virtue. O Charles, the woman who, reposing on the laurels of her boasted virtue, allows herself to be a disobliging, a peevish, a gloomy, a discontented companion, defeats one great end of the institution, which is happiness. The wife who violates the marriage vow, is indeed more criminal; but the very magnitude of her crime emancipates her husband; while she who makes him not dishonourable, but wretched,

fastens on him a misery for life, from which no laws can free him, and under which religion alone can support him.'

We continued talking till we reached home, on the multitude of marriages in which the parties are 'joined, not matched,' and where the term *union* is a miserable misnomer. I endeavoured to turn all these new acquaintances to account, and considered myself at every visit I made, as taking a lesson for my own conduct. I beheld the miscarriages of others, not only with concern for the individual, but as beacons to light me on the way. It was no breach of charity to use the aberrations of my acquaintance for the purpose of making my own course more direct. I took care, however, never to lose sight of the humbling consideration that my own deviations were equally liable to become the object of their animadversion, if the same motive had led them to the same scrutiny.

I remained some weeks longer in town indulging myself in all its safe sights, and all its sober pleasures. I examined whatever was new in art, or curious in science. I found out the best pictures, saw the best statues, explored the best museums, heard the best speakers in the courts of law, the best preachers in the church, and the best orators in parliament; attended the best lectures, and visited the best company, in the most correct, though not always the most fashionable sense of the term. I associated with many learned, sensible, and some pious men, commodities with which London, with all its faults abounds, perhaps, more than any other place on the habitable globe. I became acquainted with many agreeable, well-informed valuable women, with a few who even seemed in a good measure to live above the world while they were living in it.

There is a large class of excellent female characters, who, on account of that very excellence, are little known, because to be known is not their object. Their ambition has a better taste. They pass through life honoured and respected in their own small, but not unimportant sphere, and approved by him, 'whose they are, and whom they serve,' though their faces are hardly known in promiscuous society. If they occasion little sensation abroad, they produce much happiness at home. And when once a woman who has all 'appliances and means to get it,' *can* withstand the intoxication of the flatterer, and the adoration of the fashionable; *can* conquer the fondness for public distinction, *can* resist the temptations of that magic circle to which he is courted, and in which she is qualified to shine—this is indeed a trial of firmness; a trial in which those who have never been called to resist themselves, can hardly judge of the merit of resistance in others.

These are the women who bless, dignify, and truly adorn society. The painter indeed does not make his fortune by their sitting to him; the jeweller is neither brought into vogue by furnishing their diamonds, nor undone by not being paid for them; the prosperity of the milliner does not depend on affixing their name to a cap or a colour; the poet does not celebrate them; the novelist does not dedicate to them; but they possess the affection of their husbands, the attachment of their children, the esteem of the wise and good, and, above all, they possess *his* favour, 'whom to know is life eternal.' Among these I doubt not I might have found objects highly deserving of my heart, but the injunction of my father was a sort of panoply which guarded it.

I am persuaded that such women compose a larger portion of the sex than is generally allowed. It is not the number, but the noise which makes a sensation, and a set of fair dependent young creatures who are every night forced, some of them reluctantly, upon the public eye; and a bevy of faded matrons rouged and repaired for an ungrateful public, dead to their blandishments, do not compose the whole female world! I repeat it—a hundred amiable women, who are living in the quiet practice of their duties, and the modest exertion of their talents, do not fill the public eye, or reach the public ear, like one aspiring leader, who, hungering for observation, and disdaining censure, dreads not abuse, but oblivion: who thinks it more glorious to head a little phalanx of fashionable followers, than to hold out, as from her commanding eminence, and imposing talents she might have done, a shining example of all that is great, and good, and dignified in woman. These self-appointed queens maintain an absolute but ephemeral empire over that little *fantastic aristocracy* which they call the world—Admiration besets them, crowds attend them, conquests follow them, inferiors imitate them, rivals envy them, newspapers extol them, sonnets deify them. A few ostentatious charities are opposed as a large atonement for a *few amiable weaknesses*, while the unpaid tradesman is exposed to ruin by their vengeance, if he refuse to trust them, and to a gaol if he continue to do it.

CHAP. XI.

The three days previous to my leaving London were passed with Sir John and Lady Belfield. Knowing I was on the wing for Hampshire they promised to make their long intended visit to Stanley Grove during my stay there.

On the first of these days we were agreeably surprised at the appearance of Dr. Barlow, an old friend of Sir John, and the excellent Rector of Mr. Stanley's parish.—Being obliged to come to town on urgent business for a couple of days, he was charged to assure me of the cordial welcome which awaited me at the Grove. I was glad to make this early acquaintance with this highly respectable divine. I made a thousand inquiries about his neighbours, and expressed my impatience to know more of a family, in whose characters I already felt a more than common interest.

'Sir,' said he, 'if you set me talking of Mr. Stanley, you must abide by the consequences of your indiscretion, and bear with the loquacity of which that subject never fails to make me guilty. He is a greater blessing to me as a friend, and to my parish as an example and a benefactor than I can describe. I assured him that he could not be too minute in speaking of a man,

whom I had been early taught to admire, by that exact judge of merit, my late father.

'Mr. Stanley,' said the worthy Doctor, 'is about six and forty; his admirable wife is about six or seven years younger. He passed the early part of his life in London, in the best society His commerce with the world, was to a mind like his, all pure gain: for he brought away from it all the good it had to give, without exchanging for it one particle of his own integrity He acquired the air, manners, and sentiments of a gentleman, without any sacrifice of his sincerity. Indeed he may be said to have turned his knowledge of the world to a religious account, for it has enabled him to recommend religion to those who do not like it well enough to forgive, for its sake, the least awkwardness of gesture, or ineleganee of manner.

'When I became acquainted with the family,' continued he, 'I told Mrs. Stanley that I was afraid her husband hurt religion in one sense, as much as he recommended it in another; for that some men who would forgive him his piety for the sake of his agreeableness, would be led to dislike religion more than ever in other men, in whom the jewel was not so well set. 'We should like your religious men well enough,' will they say, 'if they all resembled Stanley.'— Whereas, the truth is, they do not so much *like* Mr. Stanley's religion as *bear* with it for the pleasure which his other qualities afford them. She assured me, that this was not altogether the case, for that his other qualities having pioneer'd his way, and hewed down the prejudices which the reputation of piety naturally raises, his endeavours to be useful to them were much facilitated, and he not only kept the ground he had gained, but was often able to turn this influence over his friends to a better account than they had intended. He converted their admiration of him into arms against their own errors.

'He possesses, in perfection,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'that sure criterion of abilities, a great power over the minds of his acquaintance, and has in a high degree that rare talent, the art of conciliation without the aid of flattery. I have seen more men brought over to his opinion by a management derived from his knowledge of mankind, and by a principle which forbade his ever using this knowledge but for good purposes, than I ever observed in any other instance; and this without the slightest deviation from his scrupulous probity.

'He is master of one great advantage in conversation, that of not only knowing *what* to say that may be useful, but exactly *when* to say it; in knowing when to press a point and when to forbear; in his sparing the self-love of a vain man, whom he wishes to reclaim by contriving to make him feel himself wrong without making him appear ridiculous. The former he knows is easily pardoned, the latter never. He has studied the human heart long enough to know that to wound pride is not the way to cure, but to inflame it; and that exasperating self-conceit, will never subdue it. He seldom, I believe, goes into company without an earnest desire to be useful to some one in it: but if circumstances are adverse; if the *mollia tempora fandi* does not present itself, he knows he should lose more than they would gain, by trying to make the occasion when he does not find it. And I have often heard him say, that when he cannot benefit others, or be benefitted by them, he endeavours to benefit himself by the disappointment, which does his own mind as much good by humbling him with the sense of his own uselessness, as the subject he wished to have introduced might have done them.

'The death of his only son, about six years ago, who had just entered his eighth year, is the only interruption his family have had to a felicity so unbroken, that I told Mr. Stanley some such calamity was necessary to convince him that he was not to be put off with so poor a portion as this world has to give. I added, that I should have been tempted to doubt his being in the favour of God, if he had totally escaped chastisement. A circumstance which to many parents would have greatly aggravated the blow, rather lightened it to him. The boy, had he lived to be of age, was to have had a large independent fortune from a distant relation, which will now go to a remote branch, unless there should be another son. 'This wealth,' said he to me, 'might have proved the boy's snare, and this independence his destruction. He who does all things well, has afflicted the parents, but he has saved the child.' The loss of an only son, however, sat heavy on his heart; but it was the means of enabling him to glorify God by his submission, I should rather say by his acquiescence. Submission is only yielding to what we cannot help. Acquiescence is a more sublime kind of resignation. It is a conviction that the divine will is holy, just, and good. He one day said to me, 'We were too fond of the mercy, but not sufficiently grateful for it. We loved him so passionately that we might have forgotten who bestowed him. To preserve us from this temptation, God in great mercy withdrew him. Let us turn our eyes from the one blessing we have lost, to the countless mercies which are continued to us, and especially to the hand which confers them; to the hand which, if we continue to murmur, may strip us of our remaining blessings.'

'I cannot,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'make a higher eulogium of Mrs. Stanley than to say, that she is every way worthy of the husband whose happiness she makes. They have a large family of lovely daughters of all ages. Lucilla, the eldest, is near nineteen; you would think me too poetical were I to say she adorns every virtue with every grace; and yet I should only speak the simple truth. Phœbe, who is just turned of fifteen, has not less vivacity and sweetness than her sister, but, from her extreme naivete and warm-heartedness, she has somewhat less discretion; and her father says, that her education has afforded him not less pleasure, but more trouble, for the branches shot so fast as to call for more pruning.'

Before I had time to thank the good Doctor for his interesting little narrative, a loud rap announced company. It was Lady Bab Lawless. With her usual versatility she plunged at once into every subject with every body. She talked to Lady Belfield of the news and her nursery, of poetry, with Sir John, of politics with

me, and religion with Dr. Barlow. She talked well upon most of these points, and not ill upon any of them: for she had the talent of embellishing subjects of which she knew but little, and a kind of conjectural sagacity and rash dexterity, which prevented her from appearing ignorant, even when she knew nothing. She thought that a full confidence in her own powers was the sure way to raise them in the estimation of others, and it generally succeeded.

Turning suddenly to Lady Belfield, she said, 'Pray, my dear, look at my flowers.' 'They are beautiful roses, indeed,' said Lady Belfield, and as exquisitely exact as if they were artificial.'—'Which in truth they are,' replied Lady Bab. 'Your mistake is a high compliment to them, but not higher than they deserve. Look especially at these roses in my cap. You positively shall go and get some at the same place.' —'Indeed,' said Lady Belfield, 'I am thinking of laying aside flowers, though my children are hardly old enough to take them.' 'What affectation!' replied Lady Bab; 'why you are not above two or three and thirty; I am almost as old again, and yet I don't think of giving up flowers to my children, or my grand-children, who will be soon wanting them. Indeed, I only now wear *white* roses.' I discovered by this, that white roses made the same approximation to sobriety in dress, that three tables made to it in cards. 'Seriously though,' continued Lady Bab, 'you must and shall go and buy some of Fanny's flowers. I need only tell you, it will be the greatest charity you ever did, and then I know you won't rest till you have been. A beautiful girl maintains her dying mother by making and selling flowers. 'Here is her direction,' throwing a card on the table.—'Oh no, this is not it. I have forgot the name, but it is within two doors of your hair-dresser, in what d'ye call the lane, just out of Oxford street. It is a poor miserable hole, but her roses are as bright as if they grew in the gardens of Armida.' She now rung the bell violently, saying she had overstayed her time, though she had not been in the house ten minutes.

Next morning I attended Lady Belfield to the exhibition. In driving home through one of the narrow passages near Oxford-street, I observed that we were in the street where the poor flower-maker lived. Lady Belfield directed her footman to inquire for the house. We went into it, and in a small but clean room, up three pair of stairs, we found a very pretty and very genteel young girl at work on her gay manufacture. The young woman presented her elegant performances with an air of uncommon grace and modesty.

She was the more interesting because the delicacy of her appearance seemed to proceed from ill health, and a tear stood in her eye while she exhibited her works. 'You do not seem well, my dear,' said Lady Belfield, with a kindness which was natural to her. 'I never care about my own health, Madam,' replied she, 'but I fear my dear mother is dying.' She stopped, and the tears which she had endeavoured to restrain now flowed plentifully down her cheeks. 'Where is your mother, child?' said Lady Belfield. 'In the next room, Madam.' 'Let us see her,' said her Ladyship, 'if it won't too much disturb her.' So saying, she led the way, and I followed her.

We found the sick woman lying on a little poor, but clean bed, pale and emaciated, but she did not seem so near her end, as Fanny's affection had made her apprehend. After some kind expressions of concern, Lady Belfield inquired into their circumstances, which she found were deplorable. 'But for that dear girl, Madam, I should have perished with want, said the good woman; 'since our misfortunes I have had nothing to support me but what she earns by making these flowers. She has ruined her own health, by sitting up the greatest part of the night to procure me necessaries, while she herself lives on a crust.'

I was so affected with this scene, that I drew Lady Belfield into the next room: 'If we cannot preserve the mother, at least let us save the daughter from destruction,' said I; 'you may command my purse.'—'I was thinking of the same thing,' she replied. 'Pray, my good girl, what sort of education have you had?'—'O, Madam,' said she, 'one much too high for my situation. But my parents, intending to qualify me for a governness, as the safest way of providing for me, have had me taught every thing necessary for that employment. I have had the best masters, and I hope I have not misemployed my time.'—'How comes it then,' said I, 'that you were not placed out in some family?' —'What, Sir! and leave my dear mother helpless and forlorn? I had rather live only on my tea and dry bread, which, indeed I have done for many months, and supply her little wants, than enjoy all the luxuries in the world at a distance from her.'

'What were your misfortunes occasioned by?' said I, while Lady Belfield was talking with the mother. 'One trouble followed another, Sir,' said she, 'but what most completely ruined us, and sent my father to prison, and brought a paralytic stroke on my mother, was his being arrested for a debt of seven hundred pounds. This sum, which he had promised to pay, was long due to him for laces, and to my mother for millinary and fancy dresses, from a lady who has not paid it to this moment, and my father is dead, and my mother dying! this sum would have saved them both!'

She was turning away to conceal the excess of her grief, when a venerable clergyman entered the room. It was the rector of the parish who came frequently to administer spiritual consolation to the poor woman. Lady Belfield knew him slightly, and highly respected his character. She took him aside and questioned him as to the disposition and conduct of these people, especially the young woman. His testimony was highly satisfactory. The girl, he said, had not only had an excellent education, but her understanding and principles were equally good. He added, that he reckoned her beauty among her misfortunes. It made good people afraid to take her into the house, and exposed her to danger from those of the opposite description.

I put my purse into Lady Belfield's hands, declining to make any present myself, lest after

the remark he had just made, I should incur the suspicions of the worthy clergyman.

We promised to call again the next day, and took our leave, but not till we had possessed ourselves of as many flowers as she could spare. I begged that we might stop and send some medical assistance to the sick woman, for though it was evident that all relief was hopeless, yet it would be a comfort to the affectionate girl's heart to know that nothing was omitted which might restore her mother

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CHAP. XII.

In the evening we talked over our little adventure with Sir John, who entered warmly into the distresses of Fanny, and was inclined to adopt our opinion, that if her character and attainments stood the test of a strict inquiry, she might hereafter probably be transplanted into their family as governess. We were interrupted in the formation of this plan by a visit from Lady Melbury, the acknowledged queen of beauty and of ton. I had long been acquainted with her character, for her charms and her accomplishments were the theme of every man of fashion, and the envy of every modish woman.

She is one of those admired but pitiable characters, who, sent by Providence as an example to their sex, degrade themselves into a warning. —Warm-hearted, feeling, liberal on the one hand; on the other vain, sentimental, romantic, extravagantly addicted to dissipation and expense, and with that union of contrarieties which distinguishes her, equally devoted to poetry and gaming, to liberality and injustice. She is too handsome to be envious, and too generous to have any relish for detraction, but she gives to excess into the opposite fault. As Lady Denham can detect blemishes in the most perfect, Lady Melbury finds perfections in the most depraved. From a judgment which cannot discriminate, a temper which will not censure, and a hunger for popularity, which can feed on the coarsest applause, she flatters egregiously and universally, on the principle of being paid back usuriously in the same coin. Prodigal of her beauty, she exists but on the homage paid to it from the drawing-room at St. James's to the mob at an election. Candour in her is as mischievous as calumny in others, for it buoys up characters which ought to sink. Not content with being blind to the bad qualities of her favourites, she invents good ones for them, and you would suppose her corrupt 'little senate' was a choir of seraphims.

A recent circumstance related by Sir John was quite characteristical. Her favourite maid was dangerously ill, and earnestly begged to see her lady who always had loaded her with favours. To all company she talked of the virtues of the poor Toinette, for whom she not only expressed but felt real compassion. Instead of one apothecary who would have sufficed, two physicians were sent for; and she herself resolved to go up and visit her, as soon as she had finished setting to music an elegy on the death of her Java Sparrow. Just as she had completed it, she received a fresh entreaty to see her maid, and was actually got to the door in order to go up stairs, when the milliner came in with such a distracting variety of beautiful new things, that there was no possibility of letting them go till she had tried every thing on, one after the other. This took up no little time. To determine which she should keep and which return, where all was so attractive, took up still more. After numberless vicissitudes and fluctuations of racking thought, it was at length decided she should take the whole. The milliner withdrew; the lady went up—Toinette had just expired.

I found her manners no less fascinating than her person. With all her modish graces, there was a tincture of romance and an appearance of softness and sensibility which gave her the variety of two characters. She was the enchanting woman of fashion, and the elegiac muse.

Lady Belfield had taken care to cover her work table with Fanny's flowers, with a view to attract any chance visitor. Lady Melbury admired them excessively. 'You must do more than admire them,' said Lady Belfield, 'you must buy and recommend.' She then told her the affecting scene we had witnessed, and described the amiable girl who supported the dying mother by making these flowers. 'It is quite enchanting,' continued she, resolving to attack Lady Melbury in her own sentimental way, 'to see the sweet girl twisting rose buds, and forming hyacinths into bouquets.' 'Dear, how charming!' exclaimed Lady Melbury; 'it is really quite touching. I will make a subscription for her, and write at the head of the list a melting description of her case. She shall bring me all her flowers and as many more as she can make. But no, we will make a party, and go and see her. You shall carry me. How interesting to see a beautiful creature making roses and hyacinths! her delicate hands and fair complexion must be amazingly set off by the contrast of the bright flowers. If it were a coarse looking girl, spinning hemp, to be sure one should pity her, but it would not be half so moving. It will be delightful. I will call on you to-morrow, exactly at two, and carry you all. Perhaps,' whispered she to Lady Belfield, 'I may work up the circumstance into a sonnet. Do think of a striking title for it. On second thoughts, the sonnet shall be sent about with the subscription, and I'll get a pretty vignette to suit it.'

'The fine creature,' said Sir John, in an accent of compassion, as she went out, 'was made for nobler purposes. How grievously does she fall short of the high expectations her early youth had raised! Oh! what a sad return does she make to Providence for his rich and varied bounties! Vain of her beauty, lavish of her money, careless of her reputation; associating with the worst company, yet formed for the best; living on the adulation of parasites, whose understanding she despises! I grieve to compare what she is with what she might have been, had she married a man of spirit, who would prudently have guided and tenderly have restrained her. He has ruined her and himself by his indifference and easiness of temper. Satisfied

with knowing how much she is admired and he envied, he never thought of reproving or restricting her. He is proud of her, but has no particular delight in her company; and trusting to her honour, lets her follow her own devices, while he follows his. She is a striking instance of the eccentricity of that bounty which springs from mere sympathy and feeling. Her charity requires stage effect; objects that have novelty, and circumstances which, as Mr. Bayes says, 'elevate and surprise.' She lost, when an infant, her mother, a woman of sense and piety; who, had she lived, would have formed the ductile mind of the daughter, turned her various talents into other channels, and raised her character to the elevation it was meant to reach.'

'How melancholy a consideration is it,' said I, 'that so superior a woman should live so much below her high destination! She is doubtless utterly destitute of any thought of religion.'

'You are much mistaken,' replied Sir John, 'I will not indeed venture to pronounce that she entertains much *thought* about it; but she by no means denies its truths, nor neglects occasionally to exhibit its outward and visible signs. She has yet not completely forgotten

All that the nurse and all the priest have taught.

I do not think that, like Lady Denham, she considers it as a commutation, but she preserves it as a habit. A religious exercise, however, never interferes with a worldly one. They are taken up in succession, but with this distinction, the worldly business is to be done, the religious one is not altogether to be left undone. She has a moral chemistry which excels in the amalgamation of contradictory ingredients. On a Sunday, at Melbury castle, if by any strange accident she and her lord happen to be there together, she first reads him a sermon, and plays at cribbage with him the rest of the evening. In town one Sunday when she had a cold, she wrote a tract on the sacrament, for her maids, and then set up all night at deep play. She declared if she had been successful she would have given her winnings to charity; but as she lost some hundreds, she said, she could now with a safe conscience borrow that sum from her charity purse, which she had hoped to add to it, to pay her debt of honour.'

Next day, within two hours of her appointed time, she came, and was complimented by Sir John, on her punctuality. 'Indeed,' said she, 'I *am* rather late, but I met with such a fascinating German novel, that it positively chained me to my bed till past three. I assure you I never lost time by not rising. In the course of a few winters I have exhausted half Hookman's catalogue, before some of my acquaintance are awake, or myself out of bed.'

We soon stopped at the humble door of which we were in search. Sir John conducted Lady Melbury up the little winding stairs. I assisted Lady Belfield. We reached the room, where Fanny was just finishing a beautiful bunch of jonquils. 'How picturesque,' whispered Lady Melbury to me—'Do lend me your pencil; I must take a sketch of that sweet girl with the jonquils in her hand. My dear creature,' continued she, 'you must not only let me have these, but you must make me twelve dozen more flowers as fast as possible, and be sure let me have a great many sprigs of jessamine and myrtle. Then snatching up a wreath of various coloured geraniums—'I must try this on my head by the glass.' So saying, she run into an adjoining room, the door of which was open; Lady Belfield having before stolen into it to speak to the poor invalid.

As soon as Lady Melbury got into the room, she uttered a loud shriek. Sir John and I ran in, and were shocked to find her near fainting. 'Oh, Belfield,' said she, 'this is a trick, and a most cruel one! Why did you not tell me where you were bringing me? Why did you not tell me the people's name?'—'I have never heard it myself,' said Sir John; 'on my honour I do not understand you.—You know as much of the woman as I know,' said Lady Belfield. 'Alas! much more,' cried she, as fast as her tears would give her leave to speak. She retired to the window for air, wringing her hands, and calling for a glass of water to keep her from fainting. I turned to the sick woman for an explanation; I saw her countenance much changed.

'This, Sir,' said she, 'is the lady, whose debt of seven hundred pounds ruined me, and was the death of my husband.' I was thunderstruck, but went to assist Lady Melbury, who implored Sir John to go home with her instantly, saying her coach should come back for us. 'But, dea Lady Belfield, do lend me twenty guineas, I have not a shilling about me.'—'Then, my dear Lady Melbury,' said Lady Belfield, 'how *could* you order twelve dozen expensive flowers?' 'Oh,' said she, 'I did not mean to have paid for them till next year.' 'And how,' replied Lady Belfield, 'could the debt which was not to have been paid for a twelvemonth have relieved the pressing wants of a creature, who must pay ready money for her materials? However, as you are distressed, we will contrive to do without your money.' 'I would pawn my diamond necklace directly,' returned she, but speaking lower, 'to own the truth, it is already in the jeweller's hands, and I wear a paste necklace of the same form.'

Sir John knowing I had been at my banker's that morning, gave me such a significant look, as restrained my hand, which was already on my pocket-book. In great seeming anguish she gave Sir John her hand, who conducted her to her coach. As he was leading her down stairs, she solemnly declared she would never again run in debt, never order more things than she wanted, and above all would never play while she lived. She was miserable because she durst not ask Lord Melbury to pay this woman, he having already given her money three times for the purpose, which she had lost at faro. Then retracting, she protested, if ever she *did* touch a card again, it should be for the sole purpose of getting something to discharge this debt. Sir John earnestly conjured her not to lay 'that flattering unction to her soul,' but to convert the present vexation into an occasion of felicity, by making it the memorable and happy æra of abandoning a practice, which injured her fortune, her fame, her principles, and her peace. 'Poor thing,' said Sir John, when he repeated to us,

Each will recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

'In an interval of weeping, she told me,' added he, 'that she was to be at the opera to-night. To the opera, faro will succeed, and to-morrow probably the diamond ear-rings will go to Grey's in pursuit of the necklace.'

Lady Belfield inquired of Fanny how it happened that Lady Melbury, who talked with *her* without surprise or emotion, discovered so much of both at the bare sight of her mother. The girl explained this by saying, that she had never been in the way while they lived in Bond-street, when her Ladyship used to come, having been always employed in an upper room, or attending her master.

Before we parted, effectual measures were taken for the comfortable subsistence of the sick mother, and for alleviating the sorrows, and lightening the labours of the daughter; and next morning I set out on my journey for Stanley Grove, Sir John and Lady Belfield promising to follow me in a few weeks.

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As soon as I got into my post-chaise, and fairly turned my back on London, I fell into a variety of reflections on the persons with whom I had been living. In this soliloquy, I was particularly struck with that desrepancy of characters, all of which are yet included under the broad comprehensive appellation of *Christians*. I found that though all differed widely from each other, they differed still more widely from that rule by which they professed to walk. Yet not one of these characters was considered as disreputable. There was not one that was profane or profligate. Not one who would not in conversation have defended Christianity if its truth had been attacked. Not one who derided or even neglected its forms; and who in her own class would not have passed for religious. Yet how little had any one of them adorned the profession she adopted! Of Mrs. Ranby, Mrs. Fentham, Lady Bab Lawless, Lady Denham, Lady Melbury, which of them would not have been startled had her Christianity been called in question? Yet how merely speculative was the religion of even the most serious among them! How superficial, or inconsistent, or mistaken, or hollow, or hypocritical, or self-deceiving was that of all the others! Had either of them been asked from what source she drew her religion, she would indignantly have answered, from the bible. Yet if we compare the copy with the model, the Christian with Christianity, how little can we trace the resemblance! In what particular did their lives imitate the life of Him *who pleased not himself*, who *did the will of his Father*: who *went about doing good*? How irreconcileable is their faith with the principles which He taught! How dissimilar their practice with the precepts He delivered! How inconsistent their lives with the example which he bequeathed! How unfounded their hope of heaven, if an entrance into heaven be restricted to those who are *like minded with Christ!*

CHAP. XIII

My father had been in early life intimately connected with the family of Mr. Stanley. Though this gentleman was his junior by several years, yet there subsisted between them such a similarity of tastes, sentiments, views and principles, that they lived in the closest friendship; and both their families having in the early part of their lives resided in London, the occasions of that thorough mutual knowledge that grows out of familiar intercourse, were much facilitated. I remembered Mr. Stanley, when I was a very little boy, paying an annual visit to my father at the Priory, and I had retained an imperfect but pleasing impression of his countenance and engaging manners.

Having had a large estate left him in Hampshire, he settled there on his marriage; an intercourse of letters had kept up the mutual attachment between him and my father. On the death of each parent, I had received a cordial invitation to come and soothe my sorrows in his society. My father enjoined me that one of my first visits after his death should be to the Grove; and, in truth, I now considered my Hampshire engagement as the *bonne bouche* of my southern excursion.

I reached Stanley Grove before dinner. I found a spacious mansion, suited to the ample fortune and liberal spirit of its possessor, I was highly gratified with the fine forest scenery in the approach to the park. The house had a noble appearance without; and within it was at once commodious and elegant. It stood on the south side of a hill, nearer the bottom than the summit, and was sheltered on the north-east by a fine old wood. The park, though it was not very extensive, was striking from the beautiful inequality of the ground, which was richly clothed with the most picturesque oaks I ever saw, interspersed with stately beeches. The grounds were laid out in good taste, but though the hand of modern improvement was visible, the owner had in one instance spared

'The obsolete prolixity of shade,'

for which the most interesting of poets so pathetically pleads. The poet's plea had saved the avenue.

I was cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley; and by that powerful and instantaneous impression which fine sense and good breeding, joined to high previous veneration of character, produce on the feelings of the guest, I at once felt myself at home. All the preliminaries of gradual acquaintance were in a manner superseded, and I soon experienced that warm and affectionate esteem, which seemed scarcely to require intercourse to strengthen, or time to confirm it. Mr. Stanley had only a few minutes to present me to his lady and two lovely daughters, before we were summoned to dinner, to which a considerable party had been invited; for the neighbourhood was populous and rather polished.

The conversation after dinner was rational, animated, and instructive. I observed that Mr Stanley lost no opportunity which fairly offered

for suggesting useful reflections. But what chiefly struck me in his manner of conversing was, that without ever pressing religion unseasonably into the service, he had the talent of making the most ordinary topics subservient to instruction, and of extracting some profitable hint, or striking out some important light, from subjects which in ordinary hands would have been unproductive of improvement. It was evident that piety was the predominating principle of his mind, and that he was consulting its interests as carefully when prudence made him forbear to press it, as when propriety allowed him to introduce it. This piety was rather visible in the sentiment than the phrase. He was of opinion that bad taste could never advance the interests of Christianity. And he gave less offence to worldly men, than most religious people I have known, because though he would on no human consideration, abate one atom of zeal, or lower any doctrine, nor disguise any truth, nor palliate, nor trim, nor compromise, yet he never contended for words or trifling distinctions. He thought it detracted from no man's piety to bring all his elegance of expression, his correctness of taste, and his accuracy of reasoning to the service of that cause, which lies the nearest to the heart of every Christian, and demands the best exertion of his best faculties.

He was also forward to promote subjects of practical use in the affairs of common life suited to the several circumstances and pursuits of his guests. But he particularly rejoiced that there was so broad, and safe, and unenclosed a field as general literature. This, he observed, always supplies men of education with an ample refuge from all vulgar, and dangerous, and unproductive topics. 'If we cannot,' said he, 'by friendly intercourse, always raise our principles, we may always keep our understandings in exercise; and those authors who supply so peaceable a creature as man, with subjects of elegant and innocent discussion, I do not reckon among the lowest benefactors of mankind.'

In my further acquaintance with Mr. Stanley, I have sometimes observed with what address he has converted a merely moral passage to a religious purpose. I have known him, when conversing with a man who would not have relished a more sacred authority, seize on a sentiment in Tully's Offices, for the lowest degree in his scale of morals, and then, gradually ascending, trace and exalt the same thought through Paley or Johnson, or Addison, or Bacon, till he has unexpectedly landed his opponent in the pure ethics of the gospel, and surprised him into the adoption of a Christian principle.

As I had heard there was a fine little flock of children, I was surprised, and almost disappointed every time the door opened, not to see them appear, for I had already began to take an interest in all that related to this most engaging family. The ladies having, to our gratification, sat longer than is usual at most tables, at length obeyed the signal of the mistress of the house. They withdrew, followed by the Miss Stanleys,

> With grace
> Which won who saw to wish their stay.

After their departure, the conversation was not changed. There was no occasion; it could not become more rational, and we did not desire that it should become less pure. Mrs. Stanley and her fair friends had taken their share in it with a good sense and delicacy which raised the tone of our society; and we did not give them to understand by a loud laugh before they were out of hearing, that we rejoiced in being emancipated from the restraint of their presence.

Mrs. Stanley is a graceful and elegant woman. Among a thousand other excellencies, she is distinguished for her judgment in adapting her discourse to the character of her guests, and for being singularly skilful in selecting her topics of conversation. I never saw a lady who possessed the talent of diffusing at her table so much pleasure to those around her without the smallest deviation from her own dignified purity. She asks such questions as strangers may be likely to gain, at least not to lose credit by answering: and she suits her interrogations to the kind of knowledge they may be supposed likely to possess. By this, two ends are answered: while she gives her guest an occasion of appearing to advantage, she puts herself in the way of gaining some information. From want of this discernment, I have known ladies ask a gentleman just arrived from the East Indies, questions about America; and others, from the absence of that true delicacy, which, where it exists, shows itself on the smallest occasions, who have inquired of a person, how he liked such a book, though she knew that in the nature of things, there was no probability of his ever having heard of it; thus assuming an ungenerous superiority herself, and mortifying another by a sense of his own comparative ignorance. If there is any one at table, who, from his station, has least claim to attention, he is sure to be treated with particular kindness by Mrs. Stanley, and the diffident never fail to be encouraged, and the modest to be brought forward, by the kindness and refinement of her attentions.

When we were summoned to the drawing room I was delighted to see four beautiful children, fresh as health, and gay as youth could make them, busily engaged with the ladies. One was romping; another singing; a third was showing some drawings of birds, the natural history of which she seemed to understand a fourth had spread a dissected map on the carpet, and had pulled down her eldest sister on thy floor to show her Copenhagen. It was an animating scene. I could have devoured the sweet creatures. I got credit with the little singer by helping her to a line which she had forgotten, and with the geographer by my superior acquaintance with the shores of the Baltic.

In the evening, when the company had left us, I asked Mrs. Stanley how she came so far to deviate from established custom as not to produce her children immediately after dinner? 'You must ask me,' said Mr. Stanley, smiling, for it was I who first ventured to suggest this bold innovation. I love my children fondly, but my children I have always at home; I have my friends but seldom; and I do not choose that any portion of the time that I wish to dedicate

to intellectual and social enjoyment should be broken in upon by another, and an interfering pleasure, which I have always within my reach. At the same time I like my children to see my friends. Company amuses, improves, and polishes them. I therefore consulted with Mrs. Stanley, how we could so manage, as to enjoy our friends without locking up our children. She recommended this expedient. The time, she said, spent by the ladies from their leaving the dining-room till the gentlemen came in to tea, was often a little heavy, it was rather an interval of anticipation than of enjoyment; those ladies who had not much *mind*, had soon exhausted their admiration of each others' worked muslins, and lace sleeves, and those who *had*, would be glad to rest it so agreeably. She therefore proposed to enliven that dull period by introducing the children.

'This little change has not only succeeded in our own family, but has been adopted by many of our neighbours. For ourselves, it has answered a double purpose. It not only delights the little things, but it delights them with less injury than the usual season of their appearance. Our children have always as much fruit as they like after their own dinner; they do not therefore want or desire the fruits, the sweetmeats, the cakes and the wine with which the guests, in order to please mamma, are too apt to cram them. Besides, poor little dears, it mixes too much selfishness with the natural delight that they have in seeing company, by connecting with it the idea of the good things they shall get. But by this alteration, we do all in our power to infuse a little disinterestedness into the pleasure they have in coming to us. We love them too tenderly to crib their little enjoyments. so we give them two pleasures instead of one, for they have their desert and our company in succession.'

Though I do not approve of too great familiarity with servants, yet I think that to an old and faithful domestic, superior consideration is due. My attendant on my present tour had lived in our family from his youth, and had the care of me before I can remember. His fidelity and good sense, and I may add his piety, had obtained for him the privilege of free speaking. 'Oh, Sir,' said he, when he came to attend me next morning, 'we are got into the right house at last.—Such a family! so godly! so sober! so charitable! 'Tis all of a piece here, Sir, Mrs. Comfit, the housekeeper, tells me that her master and mistress are the example of all the rich, and the refuge of all the poor in the neighbourhood. And as to Miss Lucilla, if the blessing of them that are ready to perish can send any body to heaven, she will go there sure enough.'

This rhapsody of honest Edwards warmed my heart, and put me in mind, that I had neglected to enquire after this worthy housekeeper, who had lived with my grand-father, and was at his death transplanted into the family of Mr. Stanley. I paid a visit, the first opportunity, to the good woman in her room, eager to learn more of a family who so much resembled my own parents, and for whom I had already conceived something more tender than mere respect.

I congratulated Mrs. Comfit on the happiness of living in so valuable a family. In return, she was even eloquent in their praises. 'Her mistress,' she said, 'was a pattern for ladies, so strict, and yet so kind! but now indeed Miss Lucilla has taken almost all the family cares from her mamma. The day she was sixteen, Sir, that is about two years and a half ago, she began to inspect the household affairs a little, and as her knowledge increased, she took more and more upon her. Miss Phœbe will very soon be old enough to relieve her sister; but my mistress won't let her daughters have any thing to do with family affairs, till they are almost women grown, both for fear it should take them off from their learning, and also give them a low turn about eating and caring for niceties, and lead them into vulgar gossip and familiarity with servants. It is time enough, she says, when their characters are a little formed; they will then gain all the good, and escape all the danger.'

Seeing me listen with the most eager and delighted attention, the worthy woman proceeded. 'In summer, Sir, Miss Stanley rises at six, and spends two hours in her closet, which is stored with the best books. At eight she consults me on the state of provisions, and other family matters, and gives me a bill of fare, subject to the inspection of her mamma. The cook has great pleasure in acting under her direction, because she allows that Miss understands when things are well done, and never finds fault in the wrong place; which, she says, is a great mortification in serving ignorant ladies, who praise or find fault by chance: not according to the cook's performance, but their own humour. She looks over my accounts every week, which being kept so short give her but little trouble; and once a month she settles every thing with her mother.

''Tis a pleasure, Sir, to see how skilful she is in accounts! One can't impose upon her a farthing if one would; and yet she is so mild and so reasonable! and so quick at distinguishing what are mistakes, and what are wilful faults! Then she is so compassionate! It will be a heart-breaking day at the Grove, Sir, whenever Miss marries.—When my master is sick, she writes his letters, reads to him, and assists her mamma in nursing him.

'After her morning's work, Sir, does she come into company, tired and cross, as ladies do who have done nothing, or are but just up? No, she comes in to make breakfast for her parents, as fresh as a rose, and as gay as a lark. An hour after breakfast, she and my master read some learned books together. She then assists in teaching her little sisters, and never were children better instructed. One day in the week, she sets aside both for them and herself to work for the poor, whom she also regularly visits at their own cottages, two evenings in the week, for she says it would be troublesome and look ostentatious to have her father's doors crowded with poor people; neither could she get at their wants and their characters half so well as by going herself to their own houses. My dear mistress has given her a small room as a store-house for clothing and books for her indigent neighbours. In this room each of the younger daughters, the day she is seven years old, has her own drawer,

with her name written on it; and almost the only competition among them is, whose shall be soonest filled with caps, aprons, and handkerchiefs. The working day is commonly concluded by one of these charitable visits. The dear creatures are loaded with their little work baskets, crammed with necessaries. This, Sir, is the day,—and it is always looked forward to with pleasure by them all. Even little Celia, the youngest, who is but just turned of five, will come to me and beg for something good to put in her basket for poor Mary or Betty such a one. I wonder I do not see any thing of the little darlings; it is about the time they used to pay me a visit.

'On Sundays before church they attend the village school; when the week's pocket money, which has been carefully hoarded for the purpose, is produced for rewards to the most deserving scholars. And yet, Sir, with all this, you may be in the house a month without hearing a word of the matter; it is all done so quietly; and when they meet at their meals they are more cheerful and gay than if they had been ever so idle.'

Here Mrs. Comfit stopped, for just then two sweet little cherry cheeked figures presented themselves at the door, swinging a straw basket between them, and crying out in a little begging voice, 'Pray Mrs. Comfit bestow your charity,—we want something coarse for the hungry, and something nice for the sick,—poor Dame Alice and her little grand daughter!' They were going on, but spying me, they coloured up to the ears, and ran away as fast as they could, though I did all in my power to detain them.

CHAP. XIV.

When Miss Stanley came in to make breakfast, she beautifully exemplified the worthy house-keeper's description. I have sometimes seen young women, whose simplicity was destitute of elegance, and others in whom a too elaborate polish had nearly effaced their native graces: Lucilla appeared to unite the simplicity of nature to the refinement of good breeding. It was thus she struck me at first sight. I forbore to form a decided opinion, till I had leisure to observe whether her mind fulfilled all that her looks promised.

Lucilla Stanley is rather perfectly elegant than perfectly beautiful. I have seen women as striking, but I never saw one so interesting. Her beauty is countenance: it is the stamp of mind intelligibly printed on the face. It is not so much the symmetry of features, as the joint triumph of intellect and sweet temper. A fine old poet has well described her:

> Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one could almost say her body thought.

Her conversation, like her countenance, is compounded of liveliness, sensibility, and delicacy. She does not say things to be quoted, but the effect of her conversation is, that it leaves an impression of pleasure on the mind, and a love of goodness on the heart. She enlivens without dazzling, and entertains without overpowering Contented to please, she has no ambition to shine.—There is nothing like effort in her expression, or vanity in her manner. She has rather a playful gaiety than a pointed wit. Of repartee she has little, and dislikes it in others: yet I have seldom met with a truer taste for inoffensive wit. Taste is indeed the predominating quality of her mind; and she may rather be said to be a nice judge of the genius of others, than to be a genius herself. She has a quick perception of whatever is beautiful or defective in composition or in character. The same true taste pervades her writing, her conversation, her dress, her domestic arrangements, and her gardening, for which last she has both a passion and a talent. Though she has a correct ear, she neither sings nor plays; and her taste is so exact in drawing, that she really seems to have *le compass dans l'œuil;* yet I never saw a pencil in her fingers, except to sketch a seat or a bower for the pleasure ground.—Her notions are too just to allow her to be satisfied with mediocrity in many things, and for perfection in any thing, she thinks that life is too short, and its duties too various and important. Having five younger sisters to assist, has induced her to neglect some acquisitions which she would have liked. Had she been an only daughter, she owns that she would have indulged a little more in the garnish and decoration of life.

At her early age, the soundness of her judgment on persons and things cannot be derived from experience; she owes it to a *tact* so fine as to enable her to seize on the strong feature, the prominent circumstance, the leading point, instead of confusing her mind and dissipating her attention, on the inferior parts of a character, a book, or a business. This justness of thinking teaches her to rate things according to their worth, and to arrange them according to their place. Her manner of speaking adds to the effect of her words, and the tone of her voice expresses with singular felicity, gaiety or kindness as her feelings direct, and the occasion demands. This manner is so natural, and her sentiments spring so spontaneously from the occasion, that it is obvious that display is never in her head, nor an eagerness for praise in her heart. I never heard her utter a word which I could have wished unsaid, or a sentiment I would have wished unthought.

As to her dress it reminds me of what Dr. Johnson once said to an acquaintance of mine, of a lady who was celebrated for dressing well. 'The best evidence that I can give you of her perfection in this respect is, that one can never remember what she had on.' The dress of Lucilla is not neglected, and it is not studied. She is as neat as the strictest delicacy *demands*, and as fashionable as the strictest delicacy *permits;* and her nymph-like form does not appear to less advantage for being veiled with scrupulous modesty.

Oh! if women in general knew what was their real interest! if they could guess with what a charm even the *appearance* of modesty invests its possessor, they would dress decorously from mere self-love, if not from principle. The designing would assume modesty as an artifice,

the coquet adopt it as an allurement, the pure as her appropriate attraction, and the voluptuous as the most infallible art of seduction.

What I admire in Miss Stanley, and what I have sometimes regretted the want of in some other women is, that I am told she is so lively, so playful, so desirous of amusing her father and mother when alone, that they are seldom so gay as in their family party. It is then that her talents are all unfolded, and that her liveliness is without restraint. She was rather silent the two or three first days after my arrival, yet it was evidently not the silence of reserve or inattention, but of delicate propriety. Her gentle frankness and undesigning temper gradually got the better of this little shyness, and she soon began to treat me as the son of her father's friend. I very early found that though a stranger might behold her without admiration, it was impossible to converse with her with indifference. Before I had been a week at the Grove, my precautions vanished, my panoply was gone, and yet I had not consulted Mr. Stanley.

In contemplating the captivating figure, and the delicate mind of this charming girl, I felt that imagination which misleads so many youthful hearts had preserved mine. The image my fancy had framed, and which had been suggested by Milton's heroine, had been refined indeed, but it had not been romantic. I had early formed an ideal standard in my mind; too high, perhaps; but its very elevation had rescued me from the common dangers attending the society of the sex. I was continually comparing the women with whom I conversed with the fair conception which filled my mind. The comparison might be unfair to them: I am sure it was not unfavourable to myself, for it preserved me from the fascination of mere personal beauty, the allurements of factitious character, and the attractions of ordinary merit.

I am aware that love is apt to throw a radiance around the being it prefers, till it becomes dazzled, less, perhaps, with the brightness of the object itself, than with the beams with which imagination has invested it. But religion, though it had not subdued my imagination, had chastised it. It had sobered the splendours of fancy, without obscuring them. It had not extinguished the passions, but it had taught me to regulate them. I now seemed to have found the being of whom I had been in search. My mind felt her excellences, my heart acknowledged its conqueror. I struggled, however, not to abandon myself to its impulses. I endeavoured to keep my own feelings in order, till I had time to appreciate a character, which appeared as artless as it was correct. And I did not allow myself to make this slight sketch of Lucilla, and of the effect she produced on my heart, till more intimate acquaintance had justified my prepossession.

But let me not forget that Mr. Stanley had another daughter. If Lucilla's character is more elevated, Phœbe's is not less amiable. Her face is equally handsome, but her figure is somewhat less delicate. She has a fine temper, and strong virtues. The little faults she has, seem to flow from the excess of her good qualities. Her susceptibility is extreme, and to guide and guard it, finds employment for her mother's fondness, and her father's prudence. Her heart overflows with gratitude for the smallest service. This warmth of her tenderness keeps her affections in more lively exercise than her judgment; it leads her to over-rate the merit of those she loves, and to estimate their excellences, less by their own worth than by their kindness to her. She soon behaved to me with the most engaging frankness, and her innocent vivacity encouraged, in turn, that affectionate freedom with which one treats a beloved sister.

The other children are gay, lovely, interesting, and sweet tempered. Their several acquisitions, for I detest the term *accomplishments*, since it has been warped from the true meaning in which Milton used it, seem to be so many individual contributions brought in to enrich the common stock of domestic delight. Their talents are never put into exercise by artificial excitements. Habitual industry, quiet exertion, successive employments, affectionate intercourse, and gay and animated relaxation make up the round of their cheerful day.

I could not forbear admiring in this happy family the graceful union of piety with cheerfulness; strictness of principle embellished, but never relaxed, by gaiety of manners; a gaiety, not such as requires turbulent pleasures to stimulate it, but evidently the serene, yet animated result of well-regulated minds; of minds actuated by a tenderness of conscience, habitually alive to the perception of the smallest sin, and kindling into holy gratitude at the smallest mercy.

I often called to mind that my father, in order to prevent my being deceived, and run away with by persons who appeared lively at first sight, had early accustomed me to discriminate carefully, whether it was not the *animal* only that was lively, and the man dull. I have found this caution of no small use in my observations on the other sex. I had frequently remarked, that the musical and the dancing ladies, and those who were most admired for modish attainments, had little *intellectual* gaiety. In numerous instances I found that the mind was the only part which was not kept in action; and no wonder, for it was the only part which had received no previous forming, no preparatory moulding.

When I mentioned this to Mr. Stanley, 'the education,' replied he, 'which now prevails, is a Mahometan education. It consists entirely in making woman an object of attraction. There are, however, a few reasonable people left, who, while they retain the object, improve upon the plan. They too would make woman attractive; but it is by sedulously labouring to make the understanding, the temper, the mind, and the manners, of their daughters as engaging as these Circassian parents endeavour to make the person.

CHAP. XV

The friendly rector frequently visited at Stanley Grove, and for my father's sake, honoured me with his particular kindness. Dr. Barlow

filled up all my ideas of a country clergyman of the higher class. There is an uniform consistency runs through his whole life and character, which often brings to my mind, allowing for the revolution in habits that almost two hundred years have necessarily produced, the incomparable *country parson* of the ingenious Mr. George Herbert.*

'I never saw *zeal without innovation*,' said Mr. Stanley, 'more exemplified than in Barlow. His piety is as enlightened as it is sincere. No errors in religion escape him through ignorance of their existence, or through carelessness in their detection, or through inactivity in opposing them. He is too honest not to attack the prevailing evil, whatever shape it may assume; too correct to excite in the wise any fears that his zeal may mislead his judgment, and too upright to be afraid of the censures which active piety must ever have to encounter from the worldly and the indifferent, from cold hearts and unfurnished heads.

'From his affectionate warmth, however, and his unremitting application, arising from the vast importance he attaches to the worth of souls, the man of the world might honour him with the title of enthusiast; while his prudence, sober-mindedness, and regularity, would draw on him from the fanatic, the appellation of formalist. Though he is far from being 'content to *dwell* in decencies,' he is careful never to neglect them. He is a clergyman all the week as well as on Sunday; for he says, if he did not spend much of the intermediate time in pastoral visits, there could not be kept up that mutual intercourse of kindness which so much facilitates his own labours, and his people's improvement. They listen to him because they love him, and they understand him, because he has familiarized them by private discourse to the great truths which he delivers from the pulpit.

Dr. Barlow has greatly diminished the growth of innovation in his parishes, by attacking the innovator with his own weapons. Not indeed by stooping to the same disorderly practices, but by opposing an enlightened earnestness to an eccentric earnestness; a zeal *with* knowledge to a zeal *without* it. He is of opinion that activity does more good than invective, and that the latter is too often resorted to, because it is the cheaper substitute.

'His charity, however, is large, and his spirit truly catholic. He honours all his truly pious brethren, who are earnest in doing good, though they may differ from him as to the manner of doing it. Yet his candour never intrenches on his firmness; and while he will not dispute with others about shades of difference, he maintains his own opinions with the steadiness of one who embraced them on the fullest conviction.

'He is a 'scholar, and being a good ripe one,' it sets him above aiming at the paltry reputation to be acquired by those false embellishments of style, those difficult and uncommon words, and that laboured inversion of sentences, by which some injudicious clergymen make themselves unacceptable to the higher, and unintelligible to the lower, and of course, the larger part of their audience. He always bears in mind that the common people are not foolish, they are only ignorant. To meet the one he preaches good sense, to suit the other, plain language. But while he seldom shoots over the heads of the uninformed, he never offends the judicious. He considers the advice of Polonius to his son to be as applicable to preachers as to travellers—

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

In his pulpit he is no wrangling polemic, but a genuine Bible Christian, deeply impressed himself, with the momentous truths he so earnestly presses upon others. His mind is so imbued, so saturated, if I may hazard the expression, with scriptural knowledge, that from that rich storehouse, he is ever ready to bring forth *treasures, new and old*, and to apply them wisely, temperately, and seasonably.

'Though he carefully inculcates universal holiness in all his discourses, yet his practical instructions are constantly deduced from those fundamental principles of Christianity which are the root, and life, and spirit of all goodness. Next to a solid piety, and a deep acquaintance with the Bible, he considers it of prime importance to a clergyman to be thoroughly acquainted with human nature in general, and with the state of his own parish in particular. The knowledge of both will alone preserve him from preaching too personally so as to hurt, or too generally so as not to touch.

'He is careful not to hurry over the prayers in so cold, inattentive, and careless a manner, as to make the audience suspect he is saving himself, that he may make a greater figure in delivering the sermon. Instead of this, the devout, reverential, and impressive manner in which he pronounces the various parts of the Liturgy, best prepares his own heart, and the hearts of his people, to receive benefit from his discourse. His petitions are delivered with such sober fervour, his exhortations with such humble dignity, his thanksgivings with such holy animation as carry the soul of the hearer along with him. When he ascends the pulpit, he never throws the liturgical service into the back ground by a long elaborate composition of his own, delivered with superior force and emphasis. And he pronounces the Lord's prayer with a solemnity which shows that he recollects its importance and its author.

'In preaching, he is careful to be distinctly heard, even by his remotest auditors, and by constant attention to this important article, he has brought his voice, which was not strong, to be particularly audible. He affixes so much importance to a distinct delivery, that he smilingly told me, he suspected the grammatical definition

* See Herbert's Country Parson, under the heads of the parson in his house, the parson praying, the parson preaching, the parson comforting, the parson's church, the parson catechising, the parson in mirth, &c. &c. The term parson has now, indeed, a vulgar and disrespectful sound, but in Herbert's time it was used in its true sense, *persona ecclesiæ*. I would recommend to those who have not seen it, this sketch of the ancient clerical life. As Mr. Herbert was a man of quality, he knew what became the more opulent of his function; as he was eminently pious, he practised all that he recommended. 'This appellation of parson,' says Judge Blackstone, 'however depreciated by clownish and familiar use, is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honourable title which a parish priest can enjoy.—*Vide Blackstone's Commentaries.*

of a substantive was originally meant for a clergyman, whose great object it was, if possible, *to be seen*, but indispensibly to be *heard, felt and understood.*

'His whole performance is distinguished by a grave and majestic simplicity, as far removed from the careless reader of a common story, as from the declamation of an actor. His hearers leave the church not so much in raptures with the preacher, as affected with the truths he has delivered. He says, he always finds he has done most good when he has been least praised, and that he feels most humbled when he receives the warmest commendation, because men generally extol most the sermons which have probed them least; whereas those which really do good, being often such as make them most uneasy, are consequently the least likely to attract panegyric.—'*They* only bear true testimony to the excellence of a discourse,' added he, 'not who commend the composition or the delivery, but they who are led by it to examine their own hearts, to search out its corruptions and to reform their lives. Reformation is the flattery I covet.'

'He is aware that the generality of hearers like to retire from a sermon with the comfortable belief, that little is to be done on *their* parts. Such hearers he always disappoints, by leaving on their minds at the close some impressive precept, deduced from, and growing out of, the preparatory doctrine. He does not press any one truth to the exclusion of all others. He proposes no subtilties, but labours to excite seriousness, to alarm the careless, to quicken the supine, to comfirm the doubting. He presses eternal things as things near at hand; as things in which every living man has an equal interest.'

Mr. Stanley says, that 'though Dr. Barlow was considered at Cambridge as a correct young man, who carefully avoided vice and even irregularity, yet being cheerful, and addicted to good society, he had a disposition to innocent conviviality, which might, unsuspectedly, have led him into the errors he abhorred. He was struck with a passage in a letter from Dr. Johnson to a young man who had just taken orders, in which, among other wholesome counsel, he advises him 'to acquire the courage to refuse *sometimes* invitations to dinner.' It is inconceivable what a degree of force and independence his mind acquired by the occasional adoption of this single hint. 'He is not only,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'the spiritual director, but the father, the counsellor, the arbitrator, and the friend of those whom Providence has placed under his instruction.

'He is happy in an excellent wife, who, by bringing him a considerable fortune, has greatly enlarged his power of doing good. But still more essentially has she increased his happiness, and raised his character by her piety and prudence. By the large part she takes in his affairs, he is enabled to give himself wholly up to the duties of his profession. She is as attentive to the bodies, as her husband is to the souls of his people, and educates her own family as sedulously as he instructs his parish.

'One day when I had been congratulating Dr. Barlow on the excellence of his wife's character, the conversation fell by a sudden transition, on the celibacy of the Roman clergy. He smiled and said, 'Let us ministers of the Reformation be careful never to provoke the people to wish for the restoration of that part of popery. I often reflect how peculiarly incumbent it is on us, to select such partners as shall never cause our emancipation from the old restrictions to be regretted. And we ourselves ought, by improving the character of our wives, to repay the debt we owe to the ecclesiastical laws of protestantism for the privilege of possessing them.'

'Will it be thought too trifling to add, how carefully this valuable pair carry their consistency into the most minute details of their family arrangements? Their daughters are no less patterns of decorum and modesty in their dress and appearance, than in the more important parts of their conduct. The Doctor says, that tho most distant and inconsiderable appendages to the temple of God, should have something of purity and decency. Besides,' added he, 'with what face could I censure improprieties from the pulpit, if the appearance of my own family in the pew below were to set my precepts at defiance, by giving an example of extravagance and vanity to the parish, and thus by making the preacher ridiculous, make his expostulations worse than ineffectual?'

'So conscientious a rector,' added Mr. Stanley, 'could not fail to be particularly careful in the choice of a curate; and a more humble, pious, diligent assistant than Mr. Jackson could not easily be found. He is always a welcome guest at my table. But this valuable man, who was about as good a judge of the world as the great Hooker, made just such another indiscreet marriage. He was drawn in to choose his wife, the daughter of a poor tradesman in the next town, because he concluded that a woman bred in humble and active life, would necessarily be humble and active herself. *Her* reason for accepting *him* was because she thought that as every clergyman was a *gentleman*, she of course, as his wife, should be a *gentlewoman*, and fit company for any body.

'He instructs my parish admirably,' said Dr. Barlow, 'but his own little family he cannot manage. His wife is continually reproaching him, that though he may know the way to heaven, he does not know how to push his way in the world. His daughter is the finest lady in the parish, and outdoes them all, not only in the extremity, but the immodesty of the fashion. It is her mother's great ambition that she should excel the Miss Stanley's and my daughters in music, while her good father's linen betrays sad marks of negligence. I once ventured to tell Mrs. Jackson, that there was only one reason which could excuse the education she had given her daughter, which was, that I presumed she intended to qualify her for getting her bread; and that if she would correct the improprieties of the girl's dress, and get her instructed in useful knowledge, I would look out for a good situation for her. This roused her indignation. She refused my offer with scorn, saying, that when she asked my charity, she would take my advice; and desired I would re-

member that one clergyman's daughter was as good as another. I told her that there was indeed a sense in which one clergyman was as good as another, because the profession dignified the lowest of the order, if, like her husband, he was a credit to that order. Yet still there were gradations in the church as well as in the state. But between the *wives* and *daughters* of the higher and lower clergy, there was the same distinction which riches and poverty have established between those of the higher and lower orders of the laity; and that rank and independence in the one case confer the same outward superiority with rank and independence in the other.'

CHAP. XVI.

Among the visiters at Stanley Grove, there was a family of ladies, who, though not particularly brilliant, were singularly engaging from their modesty, gentleness, and good sense. One day when they had just left us, Mr. Stanley obliged me with the following little relation: Mrs. Stanley and Lucilla only being present.

'Lady Aston has been a widow almost seven years. On the death of Sir George, she retired into this neighbourhood with her daughters, the eldest of whom is about the age of Lucilla. She herself had a pious but a very narrow education. Her excessive grief for the loss of her husband augmented her natural love of retirement, which she cultivated, not to the purpose of improvement, but to indulgence of melancholy. Soon after she settled here, we heard how much good she did, and in how exemplary a manner she lived, before we saw her. She was not very easy of access even to us; and after we had made our way to her, we were the only visiters she admitted for a long time. We soon learnt to admire her deadness to the world, and her unaffected humility. Our esteem for her increased with our closer intercourse, which, however, enabled us also to observe some considerable mistakes in her judgment, especially in the mode in which she was training up her daughters.—These errors we regretted, and with all possible tenderness ventured to point out to her. The girls were the prettiest demure little nuns you ever saw, mute and timid, cheerless and inactive, but kind, good and gentle.

'Their pious mother, who was naturally of a fearful and doubting mind, had had this pensive turn increased by several early domestic losses, which, even previous to Sir George's death, had contributed to fix something of a too tender and hopeless melancholy on her whole character. There are two refuges for the afflicted; two diametrically opposite ways of getting out of sorrow—religion and the world. Lady Aston had wisely chosen the former. But her scrupulous spirit had made the narrow way narrower than religion required. She read the scriptures diligently, and she prayed over them devoutly; but she had no judicious friend to direct her in these important studies. As your Mrs. Ranby attended only to the doctrines, and our friend Lady Belfield trusted indefinitely to the promises, so poor Lady Aston's broken spirit was too exclusively carried to dwell on the threatenings; together with the rigid performance of those duties which she earnestly hoped might enable her to escape them. This round of duty, of watchfulness and prayer, she invariably performed with almost the sanctity of an Apostle, but with a little too much of the scrupulosity of an ascetic. While too many are rejoicing with unfounded confidence in those animating passages of scripture, which the tenor of their lives demonstrates not to belong to them, she trembled at those denunciations which she could not fairly apply to herself. And the promises from which she might have derived reasonable consolation, she overlooked as designed for others.

'Her piety, though sincere, was a little tinctured with superstition. If any petty strictness was omitted, she tormented herself with causeless remorse. If any little rule was broken, she repaired the failure with treble diligence the following day; and laboured to retrieve her perplexed accounts with the comfortless anxiety of a person who is working out a heavy debt. I endeavoured to convince her, that an inferior duty which clashed with one of a higher order might be safely postponed at least, if not omitted.

'A diary has been found useful to many pious Christians, as a record of their sins, and of their mercies. But this poor lady spent so much time in weighing the offences of one day against those of another, that before the scruple was settled, the time for action was past. She brought herself into so much perplexity by reading over this journal of her infirmities, that her difficulties were augmented by the very means she had employed to remove them; and her conscience was disturbed by the method she had taken to quiet it. This plan, however, though distressing to a troubled mind, is wholesome to one of a contrary cast.

'*My* family, as you have seen, are rather exact in the distribution of their time, but we do not distress ourselves at interruptions which are unavoidable: but *her* arrangements were carried on with a rigour which made her consider the smallest deviation as a sin that required severe repentance. Her alms were expiations, her self-denial penances. She was rather a disciple of the mortified Baptist, than of the merciful Redeemer. Her devotions were sincere, but discouraging. They consisted much in contrition, but little in praise; much in sorrow for sin, but little in hope of its pardon. She did not sufficiently cast her care and confidence on the great propitiation. She firmly believed all that her Saviour had done and suffered, but she had not the comfort of practically appropriating the sacrifice. While she was painfully working out her salvation with fear and trembling, she indulged the most unfounded apprehensions of the divine displeasure. At Aston Hall the Almighty was literally feared, but he was not glorified. It was the obedience of a slave, not the reverential affection of a child.

'When I saw her denying herself and her daughters the most innocent enjoyments, and suspecting sin in the most lawful indulgences,

I took the liberty to tell her how little acceptable uncommanded austerities and arbitrary impositions were to the God of mercies. I observed to her, that the world, that human life, that our own sins and weaknesses found us daily and hourly occasions of exercising patience and self-denial; that life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials, but that the perpetual recurrence of petty evils and small trials is the ordinary and appointed exercise of the Christian graces. To bear with the failings of those about us with their infirmities, their bad judgment, their ill-breeding, their perverse tempers; to endure neglect where we feel we have deserved attention, and ingratitude where we expected thanks; to bear with the company of disagreeable people, whom Providence has placed in our way, and whom He has perhaps provided on purpose for the trial of our virtue: these are the best exercises; and the better, because not chosen by ourselves. To bear with vexations in business, with disappointments in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, intrusion, disturbance, in short, with whatever opposes our will and contradicts our humour; this habitual acquiescence appears to be more of the essence of self denial than any little rigours or inflictions of our own imposing. These constant, inevitable, but inferior evils, properly improved, furnish a good moral discipline, and might well, in the days of ignorance, have superseded pilgrimage and penance. It has this advantage too over the other, that it sweetens the temper and promotes humility, while the former gives rigidness instead of strength, and inflexibility instead of firmness.

'I have often thought,' said I, when Mr. Stanley made a pause, 'that we are apt to mistake our vocation by looking out of the way for occasions to exercise great and rare virtues, and by stepping over those ordinary ones which lie directly in the road before us. When we read, we fancy we could be martyrs, and when we come to act, we cannot bear even a provoking word.'

Miss Stanley looked pleased at my remark, and in a modest tone observed, that 'in no one instance did we deceive ourselves more than in fancying we could do great things well, which we were never likely to be called to do at all; while, if we were honest, we could not avoid owning how negligently we performed our own little appointed duties, and how sedulously we avoided the petty inconveniences which these duties involved.'

'By kindness,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'we gradually gained Lady Aston's confidence, and of that confidence we have availed ourselves to give something of a new face to the family. Her daughters, good as they were dutiful, by living in a solitude unenlivened by books, and unvaried by improving company, had acquired a manner rather resembling fearfulness than delicacy. Religious they were, but they had contracted gloomy views of religion. They considered it as something that must be endured in order to avoid punishment, rather than as a principle of peace, and trust, and comfort; as a task to be gone through, rather than as a privilege to be enjoyed. They were tempted to consider the Almighty as a hard master, whom however they were resolved to serve, rather than as a gracious father, who was not only loving but *love* in the abstract.—Their mother was afraid to encourage a cheerful look, lest it might lead to levity; or a sprightly thought for fear it might have a wrong tendency. She forgot, or rather she did not know, that young women were not formed for contemplative life. She forgot that in all our plans and operations we should still bear in mind that there are two worlds. As it is the fault of too many to leave the *next* out of their calculation, it was the error of Lady Aston, in forming the minds of her children, to leave out *this*. She justly considered heaven as their great aim and end; but neglected to qualify them for the present temporal life, on the due use and employment of which so obviously depends the happiness of that which is eternal.

'Her charities were very extensive, but of these charities her sweet daughters were not made the active dispensers, because an old servant, who governed not only the family, but her lady also, chose that office herself. Thus the bounty being made to flow in partial channels, the woman's relations and favourites almost entirely engrossing it, it did little comparative good.

'With fair understandings the Miss Astons had acquired very little knowledge: their mother's scrupulous mind found something dangerous in every author, who did not professedly write on religious subjects. If there were one exceptionable page in a book, otherwise valuable, instead of suppressing the page, she suppressed the book. And indeed, my dear Charles, grieved am I to think how few authors of the more entertaining kind we *can* consider as perfectly pure, and put without caution, restriction, or mutilation into the hands of our daughters. I am, however, of opinion, that as they will not always have their parents for tasters, and as they will every where, even in the most select libraries, meet with these mixed works, in which, though there is much to admire, yet there is something to expunge, it is the safest way to accustom them early to hear read the most unexceptionable parts of these books. Read them yourself to them without any air of mystery; tell them that what you omit is not worth reading, and then the omissions will not excite but stifle curiosity. The books to which I allude are those where the principle is sound and the tendency blameless, and where the few faults consist rather in coarseness than in corruption

'But to return; she fancied that these inexperienced creatures, who have never tried the world, and whose young imaginations had perhaps painted it in all the brilliant colours with which erring fancy gilds the scenes it has never beheld, and the pleasure it has never tried, could renounce it as completely as herself, who had exhausted what it has to give and was weary of it. She thought they could live contentedly in their closets, without considering that she had neglected to furnish their minds with that knowledge which may make the closet a place of enjoyment, by supplying the intervals of devotional with entertaining reading.

'We carried Lucilla and Phœbe to visit them

I believe she was a little afraid of their gay countenances. I talked to her of the necessity of literature to inform her daughters, and of pleasures to enliven them. The term pleasure alarmed her still more than that of literature. 'What pleasures were allowed to religious people? She would make her daughters as happy as she dared without offending her Maker.' I quoted the devout but liberal Hooker, who exhorts us not to regard the Almighty as a captious sophist, but as a merciful Father.

'During this conversation, we were sitting under the fine spreading oak on my lawn in front of that rich bank of flowers which you so much admire. It was a lovely evening in the end of June: the setting sun was all mild radiance, the sky all azure, the air all fragrance. —The birds were in full song. The children, sitting on the grass before us, were weaving chaplets of wild flowers.

It looked like nature in the world's first spring.

'My heart was touched with joy and gratitude. 'Look, Madam,' said I, 'at the bountiful provision which a beneficent Father makes, not only for the necessities, but for the pleasures of his children;

——————not content
With every food of life to nourish man,
He makes all nature beauty to his eye,
And music to his ear.

'These flowers are of so little apparent use, that it might be thought profuseness in any economy short of that which is divine, to gratify us at once with such forms, and such hues, and such fragrance. It is a gratification not necessary, yet exquisite, which lies somewhere between the pleasures of sense and intellect, and in a measure partakes of both. It elevates while it exhilirates, and lifts the soul from the gift to the giver. God has not left his goodness to be *inferred* from abstract speculation, from the conclusions of reason, from deduction and argument; we not only collect it from observation, but we have palpable evidences of his bounty, we feel it with our senses. Were God a hard master, might he not withhold these superfluities of goodness? Do you think he makes such rich provision for us, that we should shut our eyes and close our ears to them? Does he present such gifts with one hand, and hold in the other a stern interdict of 'touch not, taste not, handle not?' And can you believe he is less munificent in the economy of grace, than in that of nature? Do you imagine that he provides such abundant supplies for our appetites and senses here, without providing more substantial pleasures for our future enjoyment? Is not what we see a prelude to what we hope for, a pledge of what we may expect? A specimen of larger, higher, richer bounty, an encouraging cluster from the land of promise? If from his works we turn to his word, we shall find the same inexhaustible goodness exercised to still nobler purposes. Must we not hope then, even by analogy, that he has in store blessings exalted in their nature, and eternal in their duration, for all those who love and serve him in the Gospel of his Son?'

'We now got on fast. She was delighted with my wife, and grew less and less afraid of my girls. I believe, however, that we should have made a quicker progress in gaining her confidence if we had looked less happy. I suggested to her to endeavour to raise the tone of her daughters' piety, to make their habits less monastic, their tempers more cheerful, their virtues more active; to render their lives more useful, by making them the immediate instruments of her charity; to take them out of themselves, and teach them to compare their factitious distresses with real substantial misery, and to make them feel grateful for the power and the privilege of relieving it.

'As Dr. Barlow has two parishes which join, and we had pre-occupied the ground in our own, I advised them to found a school in the next, for the instruction of the young, and a friendly society for the aged of their own sex. We prevailed on them to be themselves not the nominal but the active patronesses; to take the measure of all the wants and all the merit of their immediate neighbourhood; to do every thing under the advice and superintendence of Dr. Barlow, and to make him their 'guide, philosopher, and friend.' By adopting this plan, they now see the poverty of which they only used to hear, and know personally the dependants whom they protect.

'Dr. Barlow took infinite pains to correct Lady Aston's views of religion. 'Let your notions of God' said he, 'be founded, not on your own gloomy apprehensions, and visionary imaginations, but what is revealed in his word, else the very intenseness of your feelings, the very sincerity of your devotion, may betray you into enthusiasm, into error, into superstition, into despair. Spiritual notions which are not grounded on scriptural truth, and directed and guarded by a close adherence to it, mislead tender hearts and warm imaginations. But while you rest on the sure unperverted foundation of the word of God, and pray for his Spirit to assist you in the use of his word, you will have little cause to dread that you shall fear him too much, or serve him too well. I earnestly exhort you,' continued he, 'not to take the measure of your spiritual state from circumstances which have nothing to do with it. Be not dismayed at an incidental depression which may depend on the state of your health, or your spirits, or your affairs. Look not for sensible communications. Do not consider rapturous feelings as any criterion of the favour of your Maker, nor the absence of them as any indication of his displeasure. An increasing desire to know him more, and serve him better; an increasing desire to do, and to suffer his whole will; a growing resignation to his providential dispensations, is a much surer, a much more unequivocal test.'

'I next,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'carried our worthy curate, Mr. Jackson, to visit her, and proposed that she should engage him to spend a few hours every week with the young ladies. I recommended that after he had read with them a portion of Scripture, of which he would give them a sound and plain exposition, he should convince them he had not the worse taste for being religious, by reading with them some

books of general instruction, history, travels, and polite literature. This would imbue their minds with useful knowledge, form their taste, and fill up profitably and pleasantly that time which now lay heavy on their hands; and, without intrenching on any of their duties, would qualify them to discharge them more cheerfully.

'I next suggested that they should study gardening; and that they should put themselves under the tuition of Lucilla, who is become the little Repton of the valley. To add to the interest, I requested that a fresh piece of ground might be given them, that they might not only exercise their taste, but be animated with seeing the complete effect of their own exertions; as a creation of their own would be likely to afford them more amusement, than improving on the labours of another.

'I had soon the gratification of seeing my little Carmelites, who used when they walked in the garden, to look as if they came to dig a daily portion of their own graves, now enjoying it, embellishing it, and delighted by watching its progress; and their excellent mother, who, like Spenser's Despair, used to look 'as if she never dined,' now enjoying the company of her select friends. The mother is become almost cheerful and the daughters almost gay. Their dormant faculties are awakened. Time is no longer a burden, but a blessing: the day is too short for their duties, which are performed with alacrity since they have been converted into pleasures. You will believe I did not hazard all these terrible innovations as rapidly as I recount them, but gradually, as they were able to bear it.

'This happy change in themselves has had the happiest consequences. Their friends had conceived the strongest prejudices against religion, from the gloomy garb in which they had seen it arrayed at Aston Hall. The uncle, who was also the guardian, had threatened to remove the girls before they were quite moped to death; the young baronet was actually forbidden to come home at the holidays; but now the uncle is quite reconciled to *them*, and almost to *religion*. He has resumed his fondness for the daughters; and their brother, a fine youth at Cambridge, is happy in spending his vacations with his family, to whom he is become tenderly attached. He has had his own principles and character much raised by the conversation and example of Dr. Barlow, who contrives to be at Aston Hall as much as possible when Sir George is there. He is daily expected to make his mother a visit, when I shall recommend him to your particular notice and acquaintance.'

Lucilla, blushing, said, she thought her father had too exclusively recommended the *brother* to my friendship; she would venture to say the *sisters* were equally worthy of my regard, adding, in an affectionate tone, 'they are every thing that is amiable and kind. The more you know them, Sir, the more you will admire them; for their good qualities are kept back, by the best quality of all, their modesty.' This candid and liberal praise did not sink the fair eulogist herself in my esteem.

CHAP. XVII.

I had now been near three weeks at the Grove. Ever since my arrival I had contracted the habit of pouring out my heart to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, with grateful affection and filial confidence. I still continued to do it on all subjects except one.

The more I saw of Lucilla, the more difficult I found it to resist her numberless attractions. I could not persuade myself that either prudence or duty demanded that I should guard my heart against such a combination of amiable virtues and gentle graces: virtues and graces, which, as I observed before, my mind had long been combining as a delightful idea, and which I now saw realized in a form more engaging than even my own imagination had allowed itself to picture.

I did not feel courage sufficient to risk the happiness I actually enjoyed, by aspiring too suddenly to a happiness more perfect. I dared not yet avow to the parents, or the daughter, feelings, which my fears told me, might possibly be discouraged, and which, if discouraged, would at once dash to the ground a fabric of felicity that my heart, not my fancy, had erected, and which my taste, my judgment, and my principles equally approved, and delighted to contemplate.

The great critic of antiquity, in his treatise on the drama, observes that the introduction of a new person is of the next importance to a new incident. Whether the introduction of two interlocutors is equal in importance to two incidents, Aristotle has forgotten to establish. This dramatic rule was illustrated by the arrival of Sir John and Lady Belfield, who, though not new to the reader or the writer, were new at Stanley Grove.

The early friendship of the two gentlemen had suffered little diminution from absence, though their intercourse had been much interrupted; Sir John, who was a few years younger than his friend, since his marriage, having lived as entirely in the town, as Mr. Stanley had done in the country. Mrs. Stanley had indeed seen Lady Belfield a few times in Cavendish Square, but her ladyship had never before been introduced to the other inhabitants of the Grove.

The guests were received with cordial affection, and easily fell into the family habits, which they did not wish to interrupt, but from the observation of which they hoped to improve their own. They were charmed with the interesting variety of characters in the lovely young family, who in return were delighted with the politeness, kindness, and cheerfulness of their father's guests.

Shall I avow my own meanness? Cordially as I loved the Belfields, I am afraid I saw them arrive with a slight tincture of jealousy. They would, I thought, by enlarging the family circle, throw me at a farther distance from the being whom I wished to contemplate nearly. They would, by dividing her attention, diminish my proportion. I had been hitherto the sole guest, I was now to be one of several. This was the first discovery I made that love is a narrower of the heart. I tried to subdue the ungenerous

feeling, and to meet my valuable friends with a warmth adequate to that which they so kindly manifested. I found that a wrong feeling at which one has virtue enough left to blush, is seldom lasting, and shame soon expelled it.

The first day was passed in mutual inquiries and mutual communications. Lady Belfield told me that the amiable Fanny, after having wept over the grave of her mother, was removed to the house of the benevolent clergyman, who had kindly promised her an asylum, till Lady Belfield's return to town, when it was intended she should be received into her family; that worthy man and his wife having taken on themselves a full responsibility for her character and disposition, and generously promised that they would exert themselves to advance her progress in knowledge during the interval. Lady Belfield added that every inquiry respecting Fanny, whom we must now call Miss Stokes, had been attended with the most satisfactory result, her principles being as unquestionable as her talents.

After dinner I observed that whenever the door opened, Lady Belfield's eye was always turned towards it, in expectation of seeing the children. Her affectionate heart felt disappointed on finding that they did not appear, and she could not forbear whispering me, who sat next her, 'that she was afraid the piety of our good friends was a little tinctured with severity. For her part she saw no reason why religion should diminish one's affection for one's children, and rob them of their innocent pleasures.' I assured her gravely I thought so too; but forbore telling her how totally inapposite her application was to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. She seemed glad to find me of her opinion, and gave up all hopes of seeing the 'little melancholy recluses,' as she called them, 'unless,' she said, laughing, 'she might be permitted to look at them through the grate of their cells.' I smiled, but did not undeceive her, and affected to join in her compassion. When we went to attend the ladies in the drawing room, I was delighted to find Lady Belfield sitting on a low stool, the whole gay groupe at play round her. A blush mixed itself with her good natured smile, as we interchanged a significant look. She was questioning one of the elder ones, while the youngest sat on her lap singing. Sir John entered, with that kindness and good humour so natural to him, into the sports of the others, who, though wild with health and spirits, were always gentle and docile. He had a thousand pleasant things to entertain them with. He too, it seems, had not been without his misgivings.

'Are not these poor miserable recluses?' whispered I maliciously to her Ladyship; 'and are not these rueful looks proof positive that religion diminishes our affection for our children? and is it not abridging their innocent pleasures, to give them their full range in a fresh airy apartment, instead of cramming them into an eating room, of which the air is made almost fœtid by the fumes of the dinner and a crowded table? and is it not better that they should spoil the pleasure of the company, though the mischief they do is bought by the sacrifice of their own liberty?' 'I make my *amende*,' said she. 'I never will be so forward again to suspect piety of ill nature.' 'So far from it, Caroline,' said sir John, 'that we will adopt the practice we were so forward to blame; and I shall not do it,' said he, 'more from regard to the company, than to the children, who I am sure will be gainers in point of enjoyment; liberty I perceive is to them positive pleasure, and paramount to any which our false epicurism can contrive for them.'

'Well, Charles,' said Sir John, as soon as he saw me alone, 'now tell us about this Lucilla, this paragon, this nonpariel of Dr. Barlow's. Tell me what is she? or rather what is she not?'

'First,' replied I, 'I will, as you desire, define her by negatives—she is *not* a professed beauty, she is *not* a professed genius, she is *not* a professed philosopher, she is *not* a professed wit, she is *not* a professed any thing; and, I thank my stars, she is *not* an artist!' 'Bravo, Charles; now as to what she is!' 'She is,' replied I, 'from nature—a woman, gentle, feeling, animated, modest. She is, by education, elegant, informed, enlightened. She is, from religion, pious, humble, candid, charitable.'

'What a refreshment will it be,' said sir John, 'to see a girl of fine sense, more cultivated than accomplished,—the creature, not of fiddlers and dancing masters, but of nature, of books, and of good company! If there is the same mixture of spirit and delicacy in her character, that there is of softness and animation in her countenance, she is a dangerous girl, Charles.'

'She certainly does,' said I, 'possess the essential charm of beauty where it exists; and the most effectual substitute for it, where it does not; the power of prepossessing the beholder, by her look and manner, in favour of her understanding and temper.'

This prepossession, I afterwards found confirmed, not only by her own share in the conversation, but by its effect on myself; I always feel that our intercourse unfolds not only her powers but my own. In conversing with such a woman, I am apt to fancy that I have more understanding, because her animating presence brings it more into exercise.

After breakfast, next day, the conversation happened to turn on the indispensable importance of unbounded confidence to the happiness of married persons. Mr. Stanley expressed his regret, that though it was one of the grand ingredients of domestic comfort, yet it was sometimes unavoidably prevented by an unhappy inequality of mind between the parties, by violence, or imprudence, or imbecility on one side, which almost compelled the other to a degree of reserve, as incompatible with the design of the union, as with the frankness of the individual.

'We have had an instance among our own friends,' replied Sir John, 'of this evil being produced, not by any of the faults to which you have adverted, but by an excess of misapplied sensibility, in two persons of near equality as to merit, and in both of whom the utmost purity of mind, and exactness of conduct, rendered all concealment superfluous. Our worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton married from motives of affection, and with an high opinion of each other's merit, which their long and intimate

connection has rather contributed to exalt than to lower; and yet, now at the end of seven years, they are only beginning to be happy. They contrived to make each other as comfortable by an excess of tenderness, as some married pairs are rendered by want of it. A mistaken sensibility has intrenched not only on their comfort, but on their sincerity. Their resolution never to give each other pain, has led them to live in a constant state of petty concealment. They are neither of them remarkably healthy, and to hide from each other every little indisposition, has kept up a continual vigilance to conceal illness on the one part, and to detect it on the other, till it became a trial of skill which could make the other most unhappy; each suffering much more by suspicion when there was no occasion for it, than they could have done by the acknowledgment of slight complaints, when they actually existed.

'This valuable pair, after seven years apprenticeship to a petty martyrdom, have at last found out, that it is better to submit to the inevitable ills of life cheerfully and in concert, and to comfort each other under them cordially, than alternately to suffer and inflict the pain of perpetual disingenuousness. They have at last discovered that uninterrupted prosperity is not the lot of man.—Each is happier now with knowing that the other is sometimes sick, than they used to be with suspecting they were always so. The physician is now no longer secretly sent for to one, when the other is known to be from home. The apothecary is at last allowed to walk boldly up the public stair-case, fearless of detection.

'These amiable persons have at length attained all that was wanting to their felicity, that of each believing the other to be well, when they *say* they are so. They have found out that unreserved communication is the lawful commerce of conjugal affection, and that all concealment is contraband.'

'Surely,' said I, when Sir John had done speaking, 'it is a false compliment to the objects of our affection, if, for the sake of sparing them a transient uneasiness, we rob them of the comfort to which they are entitled, of mitigating our suffering by partaking it. All dissimulation is disloyalty to love. Besides, it appears to me to be an introduction to wider evils; and I should fear, both for the woman I loved and for myself, that if once we allowed ourselves concealment in one point, where we thought the motive excused us, we might learn to adopt it in others, where the principle was more evidently wrong.'

'Besides,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'it argues a lamentable ignorance of human life, to set out with an expectation of health without interruption, and of happiness without alloy. When young persons marry with the fairest prospects, they should never forget that infirmity is inseparably bound up with their very nature, and that in bearing one another's burthens, they fulfil one of the highest duties of the union.'

CHAP. XVIII.

After supper, when only the family party were present, the conversation turned on the unhappy effects of misguided passion. Mrs. Stanley lamented that novels, with a very few admirable exceptions, had done infinite mischief by so completely establishing the omnipotence of love, that the young reader was almost systematically taught an unresisting submission to a feeling, because the feeling was commonly represented as irresistible.

'Young ladies,' said Sir John, smiling, 'in their blind submission to this imaginary omnipotence, are apt to be necessarians. When they *fall* in love, as it is so justly called, they then obey their *fate;* but in their stout opposition to prudence and duty, they most manfully exert their *free will;* so that they want nothing but the *knowledge absolute*, of the miseries attendant on an indiscreet attachment, completely to exemplify the occupation assigned by Milton to a class of beings to whom it would not be gallant to resemble young ladies.'

Mrs. Stanley continued to assert, that ill-placed affection only became invincible, because its supposed invincibility had been first erected into a principle. She then adverted to the power of religion in subduing the passions, tha of love among the rest.

I ventured to ask Lucilla, who was sitting next me, (a happiness which by some means or other, I generally contrived to enjoy,) what were her sentiments on this point? With a little confusion, she said, 'to conquer an ill-placed attachment, I conceive may be effected by motives inferior to Religion. Reason, the humbling conviction of having made an unworthy choice, for I will not resort to so bad a motive as pride, may easily accomplish it. But to conquer a well founded affection, a justifiable attachment, I should imagine, requires the powerful principle of Christian piety; and what cannot that effect?' She stopped, and blushed, as fearing she had said too much.

Lady Belfield observed, that she believed a virtuous attachment might possibly be subdued by the principle Miss Stanley had mentioned; yet she doubted if it were in the power of religion itself, to enable the heart to conquer aversion, much less to establish affection for an object for whom dislike had been entertained.

'I believe,' said Mr. Stanley, 'the example is rare, and the exertion difficult; but that which is difficult to us, is not impossible to Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand. And I am happy to resolve Lady Belfield's doubt by a case in point.

'You cannot, Sir John, have forgotten our old London acquaintance, Carlton?'—'No,' replied he, 'nor can I ever forget what I have since heard, of his ungenerous treatment to that most amiable woman, his wife. I suppose he has long ago broken her heart.'

'You know,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'they married not only without any inclination on either side, but on her part, with something more than indifference, with a preference for another person. *She* married through an implicit obedience to her mother's will, which she had never in any instance opposed: *He*, because his father had threatened to disinherit him if he married any other woman; for as they were

distant relations, there was no other way of securing the estate in the family.'

'What a motive for a union so sacred and so indissoluble!' exclaimed I, with an ardour which raised a smile in the whole party. I asked pardon for my involuntary interruption, and Mr. Stanley proceeded.

'She had long entertained a partiality for a most deserving young clergyman, much her inferior in rank and fortune. But though her high sense of filial duty led her to sacrifice this innocent inclination, and though she resolved never to see him again, and had even prevailed on him to quit the country and settle in a distant place, yet Carlton was ungenerous and inconsistent enough to be jealous of her without loving her. He was guilty of great irregularities, while Mrs. Carlton set about acquitting herself of the duties of a wife, with the most meek and humble patience, burying her sorrows in her own bosom, and not allowing herself even the consolation of complaining.

'Among the many reasons for his dislike, her piety was the principal. He said, religion was of no use, but to disqualify people for the business of life; that it taught them to make a merit of despising their duties, and hating their relations; and that pride, ill-humour, opposition, and contempt for the rest of the world, were the meat and drink of all those who pretended to religion.

'At first she nearly sunk under his unkindness; her health declined, and her spirits failed. In this distress she applied to the only sure refuge of the unhappy, and took comfort in the consideration that her trials were appointed by a merciful Father to detach her from a world which she might have loved too fondly, had it not been thus stripped of its delights.

'When Mrs. Stanley, who was her confidential friend, expressed the tenderest sympathy in her sufferings, she meekly replied, 'Remember who are they whose robes are washed white in the kingdom of glory, *it is they who come out of great tribulation.* I endeavour to strengthen my faith with a view of what the best Christians have suffered, and my hope with meditating on the shortness of all suffering. I will confess my weakness,' added she: 'of the various motives to patience under all the ills of life, which the Bible presents, though my reason and religion acknowledges them all, there is not one that comes home so powerfully to my feelings as this,—*the time is short.*'

'Another time Mrs. Stanley, who had heard of some recent irregularities of Carlton, called upon her, and lamented the solitude to which she was often left for days together, advised her to have a female friend in her house, that her mind might not be left to prey upon itself by living so much alone. She thanked her for the kind suggestion, but said she felt it was wiser and better not to have a confidential friend always at hand, 'for of what subject should we talk,' said she, 'but of my husband's faults? Ought I to allow myself in such a practice? It would lead me to indulge a habit of complaint which I am labouring to subdue. The compassion of my friend would only sharpen my feelings which I wish to blunt. Giving vent to a flame only makes it rage the more; if suppressing cannot subdue it, at least the consciousness that I am doing my duty will enable me to support it. When we feel,' added she, 'that we are *doing* wrong, the opening of our heart, may strengthen our virtue; but when we are *suffering* wrong, the mind demands another sort of strength; it wants higher support than friendship has to impart. It pours out its sorrows in prayer with fuller confidence, knowing that he who sees can sustain; that he who hears will recompense; that he will judge, not our weakness but our effort to conquer it; not our success but our endeavours; with him endeavour is victory.

'The grace I most want,' added she, 'is humility. A partial friend, in order to support my spirits, would flatter my conduct; gratified with her soothing, I should, perhaps, not so entirely cast myself for comfort on God. Contented with human praise, I might rest in it. Besides having endured the smart, I would not willingly endure it in vain. We know who has said, 'If you suffer with me, you shall also reign with me.' It is not, however, to mere suffering that the promise is addressed, but to suffering for his sake, and in his spirit.' Then turning to the Bible which lay before her, and pointing to the sublime passage of St. Paul, which she had just been reading, 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'—'Pray,' said she, 'read this in connection with the next verse, which is not always done. *When* is it that it works for us this weight of glory? *Only* 'while we are looking at the things which are not seen.' Do admire the beauty of this position, and how the good is weighed against the evil, like two scales differently filled; the affliction is light, and but for a moment; the glory is a *weight*, and it is for *ever*. 'Tis a feather against lead, a grain of sand against the universe, a moment against eternity. Oh! how the scale which contains this world's light trouble kicks the beam when weighed against the glory which shall be revealed.'

'At the end of two years she had a little girl; this opened to her a new scene of duties, and a fresh source of consolation. Her religion proved itself to be of the right stamp, by making her temper still more sweet, and diffusing the happiest effects through her whole character and conversation. When her husband had staid out late, or even all night, she never reproached him. When he was at home, she received his friends with as much civility as if she had liked them. He found that his house was conducted with the utmost prudence, and that while she maintained his credit at his table, her personal expenses were almost nothing; indeed, self seemed nearly annihilated in her. He sometimes felt disappointed, because he had no cause of complaint, and was angry that he had nothing to condemn.

'As he has a very fine understanding, he was the more provoked, because he could not help seeing that her blameless conduct put him continually in the wrong. All this puzzled him.—He never suspected that there was a principle,

out of which such consequences could grow, and was ready to attribute to insensibility, that patience which nothing short of Christian piety could have inspired. He had conceived of religion, as a visionary system of words and phrases, and concluded that from so unsubstantial a theory, it would be a folly to look for practical effects.

'Sometimes when he saw her nursing his child, of whom he was very fond, he was almost tempted to admire the mother, who is a most pleasing figure; and now and then, when his heart was thus softened for a moment, he would ask himself, what reasonable ground of objection there was either to her mind or person?

'Mrs. Carlton, knowing that his affairs must necessarily be embarrassed by the extraordinary expenses he had incurred, when the steward brought her usual year's allowance, she refused to take more than half, and ordered him to employ the remainder on his master's account. The faithful old man was ready to weep, and could not forbear saying, 'Madam, you could not do more for a kind husband. Besides, it is but a drop of water in the ocean.'—'That drop,' said she, 'it is my duty to contribute.' When the steward communicated this to Carlton, he was deeply affected, refused to take the money, and again was driven to resort to the wonderful principle, from which such right but difficult actions could proceed.'

Here I interrupted Mr. Stanley. 'I am quite of the steward's opinion,' said I. 'That a woman should do this, and much more for the man who loved her, and whom she loved, is quite intelligible to every being who has a heart. But for a cruel, unfeeling tyrant! I do not comprehend it. What say you, Miss Stanley?

'Under the circumstances you suppose,' said she, blushing, 'I think the woman would have no shadow of merit; her conduct would be a mere gratification, an entire indulgence of her own feelings. The triumph of affection would have been cheap: Mrs. Carlton's was the triumph of religion; of a principle which could subdue an attachment to a worthy object, and act with such generosity towards an unworthy one.'

Mr. Stanley went on. 'Mrs. Carlton frequently set up late reading such books as might qualify her for the education of her child, but always retired before she had reason to expect Mr. Carlton, lest he might construe it into upbraiding.' One night, as he was not expected to come home at all, she sat later than usual, and had indulged herself with taking her child to pass the night in her bed. With her usual earnestness she knelt down and offered up her devotions by her bed-side, and in a manner particularly solemn and affecting prayed for her husband. Her heart was deeply touched, and she dwelt on these petitions in a strain peculiarly fervent. She prayed for his welfare in both worlds, and earnestly implored that she might be made the humble instrument of his happiness. She meekly acknowledged her own many offences; of his she said nothing.

'Thinking herself secure from interruption, her petitions were uttered aloud; her voice often faltering, and her eyes streaming with tears. Little did she think that the object of her prayers was within hearing of them. He had returned home unexpectedly, and coming softly into the room, heard her pious aspirations. He was inexpressibly affected. He wept and sighed bitterly. The light from the candles on the table fell on the blooming face of his sleeping infant, and on that of his weeping wife. It was too much for him. But he had not the virtuous courage to give way to his feelings. He had not the generosity to come forward and express the admiration he felt. He withdrew unperceived and passed the remainder of the night in great perturbation of spirit. Shame, remorse, and confusion, raised such a conflict in his mind, as prevented him from closing his eyes; while she slept in quiet, and awoke in peace.

'The next morning, during a very short interview, he behaved to her with a kindness which she had never before experienced. He had not resolution to breakfast with her, but promised, with affection in his words and manner to return to dinner. The truth was, he never quitted home, but wandered about his woods to compose and strengthen his mind. This self-examination was the first he had practised; its effects were salutary.

'A day or two previous to this they had dined at our house. He had always been much addicted to the pleasures of the table. He expressed high approbation of a particular dish, and mentioned again when he got home how much he liked it. The next morning Mrs. Carlton wrote to Lucilla to beg the receipt for making this ragout; and this day, when he returned from his solitary ramble and 'compunctious visitings,' the favourite dish, most exquisitely dressed was produced at his dinner. He thanked her for this obliging attention, and turning to the butler, directed him to tell the cook that no dish was ever so well dressed. Mrs. Carlton blushed when the honest butler said, 'Sir, it was my mistress dressed it with her own hands, because she knew your honour was fond of it.'

'Tears of gratitude rushed into Carlton's eyes, and tears of joy overflowed those of the old domestic, when his master, rising from the table, tenderly embraced his wife, and declared he was unworthy of such a treasure. 'I have been guilty of a public wrong, Johnson,' said he to his servant, 'and my reparation shall be as public. I can never deserve her, but my life shall be spent in endeavouring to do so.'

'The little girl was brought in, and her presence seemed to cement this new formed union. An augmented cheerfulness on the part of Mrs. Carlton invited an increased tenderness on that of her husband. He began every day to discover new excellences in his wife, which he readily acknowledged to herself, and to the world. The conviction of her worth had gradually been producing esteem, esteem now ripened into affection, and his affection for his wife was mingled with a blind sort of admiration of that piety which had produced such effects. He now began to think home the pleasantest place, and his wife the pleasantest companion.

'A gentle censure from him on the excessive frugality of her dress, mixed with admiration

of the purity of its motive, was an intimation to her to be more elegant. He happened to admire a gown worn by a lady whom they had visited. She not only sent for the same materials but had it made by the same pattern. A little attention, of which he felt the delicacy.

'He not only saw, but in no long time acknowledged, that a religion which produced such admirable effects, could not be so mischievous a principle as he had supposed, nor could it be an inert principle. Her prudence has accomplished what her piety began. She always watched the turn of his eye, to see how far she might venture, and changed the discourse when the look was not encouraging. She never tired him with lectures, never intruded serious discourse unseasonably, nor prolonged it improperly. His early love of reading, which had for some years given way to more turbulent pleasures, he has resumed; and frequently insists, that the books he reads to her shall be of her own choosing. In this choice she exercises the nicest discretion, selecting such as may gently lead his mind to higher pursuits, but which at the same time are so elegantly written, as not to disgust his taste. In all this Mrs. Stanley is her friend and counsellor.

'While Mrs. Carlton is advancing her husband's relish for books of piety, he is forming her's to polite literature. She herself often proposes an amusing book, that he may not suspect her of a wish to abridge his innocent gratifications; and by this complaisance she gains more than she loses, for, not to be outdone in generosity, he often proposes some pious one in return. Thus their mutual sacrifices are mutual benefits. She has found out that he has a highly cultivated understanding, and he has discovered that she has a mind remarkably susceptible of cultivation. He has by degrees dropt most of his former associates, and has entirely renounced the diversions into which they led him. He is become a frequent and welcome visitor here. His conduct is uniformly respectable, and I look forward with hope to his becoming even a shining character. There is, however, a pertinacity, I may say a sincerity, in his temper, which somewhat keeps him back. He will never adopt any principle without the most complete conviction of his own mind; nor profess any truth, of which he himself does not actually feel the force.'

Lady Belfield, after thanking Mr. Stanley for his interesting little narrative, earnestly requested that Sir John would renew his acquaintance with Mr. Carlton, that she herself might be enabled to profit by such an affecting example of the power of genuine religion as his wife exhibited; confessing that one such living instance would weigh more with her than a hundred arguments. Mrs. Stanley obligingly promised to invite them to dinner the first leisure day.

Mr. Stanley now informed us that Sir George Aston was arrived from Cambridge on a visit to his mother and sisters; that he was a youth of great promise, whom he begged to introduce to us as a young man in whose welfare he took a lively concern, and on the right formation of whose character much would depend, as he had a large estate, and the family interest in the country would give him a very considerable influence; to this influence it was, therefore, of great importance to give a right direction. We next morning took a ride to Aston Hall, and I commenced an acquaintance with the engaging young baronet, which I doubt not, from what I saw and heard, will hereafter ripen into friendship.

CHAP. XIX.

The good rector joined the party at dinner. The conversation afterwards happened to turn on the value of human opinion, and Sir John Belfield made the hackneyed observation, that the desire of obtaining it should never be discouraged, it being highly useful as a motive of action.

'Yes,' said Dr. Barlow, 'it certainly has its uses in a world, the affairs of which must be chiefly carried on by worldly men; a world which is itself governed by low motives. But human applause is not a Christian principle of action; nay, it is so adverse to Christianity, that our Saviour himself assigns it as a powerful cause of men's not believing, or at least not confessing him, *because they loved the praise of men.* The eager desire of fame is a sort of separation line between Paganism and Christianity. The ancient philosophers have left us many shining examples of moderation in earthly things, and of the contempt of riches. So far the light of reason, and a noble self-denial carried them; and many a Christian may blush at these instances of their superiority; but of an indifference to fame, of a deadness to human applause, except as founded on a loftiness of spirit, disdain of their judges, and self-sufficient pride, I do not recollect any instance.'

'And yet,' said Sir John, 'I remember Seneca says in one of his epistles, that no man expresses such a respect and devotion to virtue, as he who forfeits the *repute* of being a good man, that he may not forfeit the *conscience* of being such.'

'They might,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'incidentally express some such sentiment, in a well turned period, to give antithesis to an expression, or weight to an apothegm; they might declaim against it in a fit of disappointment, in the burst of indignation excited by a recent loss of popularity; but I question if they ever once acted upon it. I question if Marius himself, sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, actually felt it. Seldom, if ever, does it seem to have been inculcated as a principle, or enforced as a rule of action: nor could it.....it was 'against the canon law of their foundation.'

Sir John. 'Yet a good man struggling with adversity is, I think, represented by one of their authors, as an object worthy of the attention of the gods.'

Stanley. 'Yes—but the divine approbation alone was never proposed as the standard of right, or the reward of actions, except by divine revelation.'

'Nothing seems more difficult,' said I, 'to settle than the standard of right. Every man has a standard of his own, which he considers as of universal application. One makes his own

tastes, desires and appetites, his rule of right; another the example of certain individuals, fallible like himself; a third, and indeed the generality, the maxims, habits, and manners of the fashionable part of the world.'

Sir John. 'But since it is so difficult to discriminate between allowable indulgence and criminal conformity, the life of a conscientious man, if he be not constitutionally temperate, or habitually firm, must be poisoned with solicitude, and perpetually racked with the fear of exceeding his limits.'

Stanley. 'My dear Belfield, the peace and security of a Christian, we well know, are not left to depend on constitutional temperance, or habitual firmness. These are, as the young Numidian says,

Perfections that are placed in bones and nerves.

There is a higher and surer way to prevent the solicitude which, by correcting the principle; to get the heart set right; to be jealous over ourselves; to be careful never to venture to the edge of our lawful limits; in short, and that is the only infallible standard, to live in the conscientious practice of measuring all we say, and do, and think, by the unerring rule of God's word.'

Sir John. 'The impossibility of reaching the perfection which that rule requires, sometimes discourages well meaning men, as if the attempt were hopeless.

Dr. Barlow. 'That is, Sir, because they take up with a kind of hearsay Christianity. Its reputed pains and penalties drive them off from inquiring for themselves. They rest on the surface.—If they would go deeper they would see that the Spirit which dictated the Scripture is a Spirit of power as well as a Spirit of promise. All that he requires us to do, he enables us to perform. He does not prescribe 'rules' without furnishing us with arms.'

In answer to some further remarks of Sir John, who spoke with due abhorrence of any instance of actual vice, but who seemed to have no just idea of its root and principle. Dr. Barlow observed: 'While every one agrees in reprobating wicked actions, few, comparatively, are aware of the natural and habitual evil which lurks in the heart. To this the Bible particularly directs our attention. In describing a bad character, it does not say that his *actions* are flagitious, but that 'God is not in all his *thoughts*.' This is the description of a thoroughly worldly man. Those who are given up completely to the world, to its maxims, its principles, its cares, or its pleasures, cannot entertain thoughts of God. And to be unmindful of his providence, to be regardless of his presence, to be insensible to his mercies, must be nearly as offensive to Him as to deny his existence. Excesssive dissipation, a supreme love of money, or an entire devotedness to ambition, drinks up that spirit, swallows up that affection, exhausts that vigour, starves that zeal, with which a Christian should devote himself to serve his Maker.

'Pray observe,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'that I am not speaking of avowed profligates, but of decent characters; men who, while they are pursuing, with keen intenseness, the great objects of their attachment, do not deride or even totally neglect religious observances; yet think they do much and well, by affording some old scraps of refuse time to a few wary prayers and sleepy thoughts, from a mind worn down with engagements of pleasure, or projects of accumulation, or schemes of ambition. In all these several pursuits, there may be nothing which, to the gross perceptions of the world, would appear to be moral turpitude. The pleasure may not be profligacy, the wealth so cherished may not have been fraudulently obtained, the ambition, in human estimation, may not be dishonourable; but an alienation from God, an indifference to eternal things, a spirit incompatible with the spirit of the gospel, will be found at the bottom of all these restless pursuits.'

'I am entirely of your opinion, Doctor,' said Mr. Stanley,' 'it is taking up with something short of real Christianity; it is an apostacy from the doctrines of the Bible, it is the substitution of a spurious and popular religion, for that which was revealed from heaven; it is a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints that has so fatally sunk our morality, and given countenance to that low standard of practical virtue which prevails. If we lower the principle, if we obscure the light, if we reject, the influence, if we sully the purity, if we abridge the strictness of the divine law, there will remain no ascending power in the soul, no stirring spirit, no quickening aspiration after perfection, no stretching forward after that holiness to which the beatific vision is specifically promised. It is in vain to expect that the practice will rise higher than the principle which inspires it; that the habits will be superior to the motives which govern them.'

Dr. Barlow. 'Selfishness, security, and sensuality are predicted by our Saviour as the character of the last times. In alluding to the antediluvian world, and the cause of its destruction, eating, drinking, and marrying, could not be named in the Gospel as things censurable in themselves, they being necessary to the very existence of that world, which the abuse of them was tending to destroy. Our Saviour does not describe criminality by the excess, but by the spirit of the act. He speaks of eating, not gluttony; of drinking, not intoxication; of marriage, not licentious intercourse. This seems a plain intimation, that carrying on the transactions of the world in the spirit of the world, and that habitual deadness to the concerns of eternity, in being so alive to the pleasures or the interests of the present moment, do not indicate a state of safety, even where gross acts of vice may be rare.'

Stanley. 'It is not by a few, or even many instances of excessive wickedness that the moral state of a country is to be judged, but by a general averseness and indifference to *real* religion. A few examples of glaring impiety may furnish more subject for declamation, but are not near so deadly a symptom. It is no new remark, that more men are undone by an excessive indulgence in things permitted, than by the commission of avowed sins.'

Sir John. 'How happy are those, who, by their faith and piety are delivered from these difficulties!'

Stanley. 'My dear Belfield where are those privileged beings? It is one sad proof of human infirmity, that the best men have continually these things to struggle with. What makes the difference is, that those whom we call good men struggle on to the end, while the others, not seeing the danger do not struggle at all.'

'Christians,' said Dr. Barlow, 'who would strictly keep within the bounds prescribed by their religion, should imitate the ancient Romans, who carefully watched that their god Terminus, who defined their limits, should never recede; the first step of his retreat, they said, would be the destruction of their security.'

Sir John. 'But, Doctor, pray what remedy do you recommend against this natural, I had almost said this invincible propensity to overvalue the world? I do not mean a propensity merely to overrate its pleasures and its honours, but a disposition to yield to its domination over the mind, to indulge a too earnest desire of standing well with it, to cherish a too anxious regard for its good opinion!'

Dr. Barlow. 'The knowledge of the disease should precede the application of the remedy.—Human applause is by a worldly man reckoned not only among the luxuries of life, but among articles of the first necessity. An undue desire to obtain it, has certainly its foundation in vanity; and it is one of our grand errors to reckon vanity a trivial fault. And over estimation of character, and an anxious wish to conciliate all suffrages, is an infirmity from which even worthy men are not exempt; nay, it is a weakness from which, if they are not governed by a strict religious principle, worthy men are in most danger. Reputation being in itself so very desirable a good, those who actually possess it, and in some sense deserve to possess it, are apt to make it their standard, and to rest in it as their supreme aim and end.'

Sir John. 'You have exposed the latent principle, it remains that you suggest its cure.'

Dr. Barlow. 'I believe the most effectual remedy would be, to excite in the mind frequent thoughts of our divine Redeemer, and of *his* estimate of that world on which we so fondly set our affections, and whose approbation we are too apt to make the chief object of our ambition.'

Sir John. 'I allow it to have been necessary, that Christ in the great end which he had to accomplish, should have been poor, and neglected and contemned, and that he should have trampled on the great things of this world, human applause among the rest; but I do not conceive that this obligation extends to his followers, nor that we are called upon to partake the poverty which he preferred, or to renounce the wealth and grandeur which he set at nought, or to imitate him in making himself of no reputation.'

Dr. Barlow. 'We are not indeed called to resemble him in his external circumstances. It is not our bounden duty to be necessarily exposed to the same contempt; nor are we obliged to embrace the same ignominy. Yet it seems a natural consequence of our Christian profession, that the things which he despised, we should not venerate; the vanities he trampled on, we should not admire; the world which he censured, we ought not to idolize; the ease which he renounced, we should not rate too highly the fame which he set at nought, we ought not anxiously to covet.—Surely the followers of him who was 'despised and rejected of men,' should not seek their highest gratification from the flattery and applause of men. The truth is, in all discourses on this subject, we are compelled continually to revert to the observation that Christianity is a religion of the *heart*. And though we are not called upon to partake the poverty and meanness of his situation, yet the precept is clear and direct, respecting the temper by which we should be governed.

'Let the same *mind* be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' If, therefore, we happen to possess that wealth and grandeur which he disdained, we should *possess them as though we possessed them not.* We have a fair and liberal permission to use them as his gift, and to his glory, but not to erect them into the supreme objects of our attachment. In the same manner in every other point, it is still the spirit of the act, the temper of the mind to which we are to look. For instance, I do not think that I am obliged to show my faith by sacrificing my son nor my obedience, by selling all that I have to give to the poor; but I think I am bound by the spirit of these two powerful commands, to practice a cheerful acquiescence in the whole will of God, in suffering and renouncing, as well as in doing, when I know what is really his will.'

CHAP. XX.

The pleasant reflections excited by the interesting conversation of the evening were cruelly interrupted by my faithful Edwards. 'Sir, said he, when he came to attend me, 'do you know that all the talk of the Hall to night at supper was, that Miss Stanley is going to be married to young Lord Staunton? He is a cousin of Mrs. Carlton's, and Mrs. Stanley's coachman brought home the news from thence yesterday. I could not get at the very truth, because Mrs. Comfit was out of the way; but all the servants agree, that though he is a lord, and rich, and handsome, he is not half good enough for her. Indeed, Sir, they say he is no better than he should be.'

I was thunderstruck at this intelligence. It was a trial I had not suspected. 'Does he visit here then, Edwards,' said I, 'for I had neither seen nor heard of him.'—'No Sir,' said he, 'but Miss meets him at Mr. Carlton's.' This shocked me beyond expression. Lucilla meet a man at another house! Lucilla carry on a clandestine engagement! Can Mrs. Carlton be capable of conniving at it! Yet if it were not clandestine, why should he not visit the Grove?'

These tormenting reflections kept me awake the whole night. To acquit Lucilla, Edward's story made difficult; to condemn her, my heart found impossible. One moment I blamed my own foolish timidity, which had kept me back from making any proposal, and the next, I was glad that the delay would enable me to sift the

truth, and to probe her character. 'If I do not find consisteney here,' said I, 'I shall renounce all confidence in human virtue.'

I arose early and went to indulge my meditations in the garden. I saw Mr. Stanley sitting under the favourite oak. I was instantly tempted to go and open my heart to him, but seeing a book in his hand, I feared to interrupt him; and was turning into another walk, till I had aequired more composure—He called after me, and invited me to sit down.

How violent were my fluetuations! How inconsistent were my feelings! How mueh at variance was my reason with my heart! The man on earth with whom I wished to confer invited me to a conferenee. With a mind under the dominion of a passion whieh I was eager to deelare, yet agitated with an uneertainty which I had as mueh reason to fear might be painfully as pleasantly removed; I stood doubtful whether to seize or to deeline the oeeasion whieh thus presented itself to me. A moment's refleetion, however eonvineed me that the opportunity was too inviting to be negleeted. My impatienee for an eelaircissement on Lord Staunton's subject was too powerful to be any longer resisted.

At length with the most unfeigned diffidenee, and a hesitation which I feared would render my words unintelligible, I ventured to express my tender admiration of Miss Stanley, and implored permission to address her.

My applieation did not seem to surprise him. He only gravely said, 'We will talk of this some future day.' This eold and laeonie reply instantly sunk my spirits. I was shoeked and visibly eonfused. 'It is too late,' said I to myself. 'Happy Lord Staunton!' He saw my distress, and taking my hand with the utmost kindness of voiee and manner, said, My dear young friend, eontent yourself for the present with the assuranee of my entire esteem and affeetion. This is a very early deelaration. You are seareely aequainted with Lucilla; you do not yet knew,' added he, smiling, 'half her faults.'

'Only tell me, My dear Sir,' said I, a little re-assured, and grasping his hand, 'that when you know all mine, you will not reject me. Only tell me that you feel no repugnanee—that you have no other views—that Miss Stanley has no other——' here I stopt, my voice failed—the excess of my emotion prevented me from finishing my sentenee.—He encouragingly said, 'I know not that Lueilla has any attaehment. For myself, I have no views hostile to your wishes. You have a double interest in my heart. You are endeared to me by your personal merit, and by my tender friendship for your beloved father. But be not impetuous. Form no sudden resolution. Try to assure yourself of my daughter's affeetion, before you ask it of her. Remain here another month as my welcome guest, as the son of my friend. Take that month to examine your own heart, and to endeavour to obtain an interest in her's; we will then resume the subject.'

'But, my dear Sir,' said I, 'is not Lord Staunton—' 'Set your heart at rest,' said he. 'Though we are both a little aristoeratie in our political principles, yet when the competition is for the happiness of life, and the interests of virtue, both Lucilla and her father think with Dumont that

'A lord
'Opposed against a man, is but a man.'

So saying, he quitted me; but with a benignity in his eountenanee and manner that infused not only consolation, but joy into my heart. My spirits were at onee elated. To be allowed to think of Lueilla! To be permitted to attaeh myself to her! To be sure her heart was not engaged! To be invited to remain a month longer nnder the same roof with her—to see her—to hear her—to talk to her—all this was a happiness so great that I did not allow myself to repine, beeause it was not all I had wished to obtain.

I met Mrs. Stanley soon after. I pereeived by her illuminated eountenanee, that my proposal had been already communieated to her. I ventured to take her hand, and with the most respeetful earnestness entreated her friendship—her good offiees. 'I dare not trust myself with you just now,' said she, with an affeetionate smile; 'Mr. Stanley will think I abet rebellion, if through my eneouragement you should violate your engagements with him. 'But,' added she, kindly pressing my hand, 'you need not be mueh afraid of *me*. Mr Stanley's sentiments on this point, as on all others, are exaetly my own. We have but one heart and mind, and that heart and mind are not unfavourable to your wishes.' With a tear in her eyes, and affection in her looks, she tore herself away, evidently afraid of giving way to her feelings.

I did not think myself bound by any point of honour to eonceal the state of my heart from Sir John Belfield, who with his lady joined me soon after in the garden. I was astonished to find my passion for Miss Stanley was no seeret to either of them.—Their penetration had left me nothing to diselose. Sir John however looked serious, and affected an air of mystery which a little alarmed me. 'I own,' said he, 'there is some danger of your sueeess.' I eagerly enquired what he thought I had to fear?—'You have every thing to fear,' replied he in a tone of grave irony, 'whieh a man not four and twenty, of an honourable family, with a elear estate of four thousand a year, a person that all the ladies admire, a mind whieh all the men esteem, and a temper whieh endears you to men, women, and ehildren, *can* fear from a little country girl, whose heart is as free as a bird, and who, if I may judge by her smiles and blushes whenever you are talking to her, would have no mortal objection to sing in the same eage with you.'

'It will be a sad dull novel however,' said Lady Belfield—'all is likely to go on so smoothly that we shall flag for want of incident. No difficulties, nor adventures to heighten the interest. No eruel step-dame, no tyrant father, no capricious mistress, no moated castle, no intriguing eonfidante, no treaeherous spy, no formidable rival, not so mueh as a duel or even a ehallenge, I fear, to give variety to the monotonous scene.'

I mentioned Edward's report respecting Lord

Staunton, and owned how much it had disturbed me. 'That he admires her,' said Lady Belfield, 'is notorious. That his addresses have not been encouraged, I have also heard, but not from the family. As to Lucilla, she is the last girl that would ever insinuate even to me, to whom she is so unreserved, that she had rejected so great an offer. I have heard her express herself with an indignation, foreign to her general mildness, against women who are guilty of this fashionable, this dishonourable indelicacy.'

'Well, but Charles,' said Sir John, 'you must positively assume a little dejection, to diversify the business. It will give interest to your countenance, and pathos to your manner, and tenderness to your accent.—And you must forget all attentions, and neglect all civilities. And you must appear absent, and *distrait* and *reveur;* especially while your fate hangs in some suspense.—And you must read Petrarch, and repeat Tibullus, and write sonnets. And when you are spoken to, you must not listen. And you must wander in the grove by moon-shine, and talk to the Oreads, and the Dryads, and the Naiads—Oh! no, unfortunately, I am afraid there are no Naiads within hearing.—You must make the woods vocal with the name of Lucilla; luckily 'tis such a poetical name that echo won't be ashamed to repeat it. I have gone through it all, Charles, and know every high way and bye way in the map of love. I will, however, be serious for one moment, and tell you for your comfort, that though at your age I was full as much in for it as you are now, yet after ten years union, Lady Belfield has enabled me to declare

How much the wife is dearer than the bride.'

A tear glistened in her soft eyes at this tender compliment.

Just at that moment Lucilla happened to cross the lawn at a distance. At sight of her, I could not, as I pointed to her, forbear exclaiming, in the words of Sir John's favourite poet,

There doth beauty dwell,
There most conspicuous, even in outward shape,
Where dawns the high expression of a *mind.*

'This is very fine,' said Sir John, sarcastically; 'I admire all you young enthusiastic philosophers, with your intellectual refinement You pretend to be captivated only with *mind.* I observe, however, that previous to your raptures, you always take care to get this mind lodged in a fair and youthful form. This mental beauty is always prudently enshrined in some elegant corporeal frame before it is worshipped. I should be glad to see some of these intellectual adorers in love with the mind of an old or ugly woman. I never heard any of you fall into ecstacies in descanting on the mind of your grand-mother.' After some further irony, they left me to indulge my meditations, in the nature of which a single hour had made so pleasant a revolution.

CHAP. XXI.

The conversation of two men bred at the same school or college, when they happen to meet afterwards, is commonly uninteresting, not to say tiresome, to a third person, as involving local circumstances in which he has no concern. But this was not always the case since the meeting of my two friends.—Something was generally to be gained by their communications even on these unpromising topics.

At breakfast, Mr. Stanley said, 'Sir John, you will see here at dinner to morrow our old college acqaintance, Ned Tyrrel. Though he does not commonly live at the family house in this neighbourhood, but at a little place he has in Buckinghamshire, he comes among us periodically to receive his rents. He always invites himself, for his society is not the most engaging.'

'I heard,' replied Sir John, 'that he became a notorious profligate after he left Cambridge, though I have lost sight of him ever since we parted there. But I was glad to learn lately that he has become quite a reformed man.'

'He is so far reformed,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that he is no longer grossly licentious. But in laying down the vices of youth, he has taken up successively those which he thought better suited to the successive stages of his progress. As he withdrew himself from his loose habits and connections, ambition became his governing passion; he courted public favour, thirsted for place and distinction, and laboured by certain obliquities and some little sacrifices of principle to obtain promotion. Finding it did not answer, and all his hopes failing, he now rails at ambition, wonders men will wound their consciences and renounce their peace for vain applause and 'the bubble reputation.—His sole delight at present, I hear, is in amassing money and reading controversial divinity. Avarice has supplanted ambition, just as ambition expelled profligacy.

'In the interval in which he was passing from one of these stages to the other, in a very uneasy state of mind, he dropped in by accident where a famous irregular preacher was disseminating his Antinomian doctrines. Caught by his vehement but coarse eloquence, and captivated by an alluring doctrine, which promised much while it required little, he adopted the soothing but fallacious tenet. It is true, I hear he is become a more respectable man in his conduct, but I doubt, though I have not lately seen him, if his present state may not be rather worse than his former ones.

'In the two previous stages, he was disturbed and dissatisfied. Here he has taken up his rest. Out of this strong hold it is not probable that any subsequent vice will ever drive him, or true religion draw him. He sometimes attends public worship, but as he thinks no part of it but the sermon of much value, it is only when he likes the preacher. He has little notion of the respect due to established institutions, and does not heartily like any precomposed forms of prayer, not even our incomparable Liturgy. He reads such religious books only as tend to establish his own opinions, and talks and disputes loudly on certain doctrinal points. But an accumulating Christian, and a Christian who, for the purpose of accumulation, is said to be uncharitable, and even somewhat oppressive, is paradox which I cannot solve, and an anomaly

which I cannot comprehend. Covetousness is, as I said, a more creditable vice than Ned's former ones, but, for that very reason more dangerous.'

'From this sober vice,' said I, 'proceeded the blackest crime ever perpetrated by human wickedness: for it does not appear that Judas, in his direful treason, was instigated by malice. It is observable, that when our Saviour names this sin, it is with an emphatical warning, as knowing its mischief to be greater because its scandal was less. Not content with a single caution, he doubles his exhortation, '*Take heed* and *beware* of covetousness.'

After some remarks of Sir John which I do not recollect, Mr. Stanley said, 'I did not intend making a philippic against covetousness, a sin to which I believe no one here is addicted. Let us not, however, plume ourselves in not being guilty of a vice, to which, as we have no natural bias, so in not committing it, we resist no temptation. What I meant to insist on was, that exchanging a turbulent for a quiet sin, or a scandalous for an orderly one, is not reformation; or if you will allow me the strong word, is not conversion.'

Mr. Tyrrel, according to his appointment, came to dinner, and brought with him his nephew, Mr. Edward Tyrrel, whom he had lately entered at the university, with a design to prepare him for holy orders. He was a well-disposed young man, but his previous education was said to have been very much neglected, and he was rather deficient in the necessary learning. Mr. Stanley had heard that Tyrrel had two reasons for breeding him to the church. In the first place, he fancied it was the cheapest profession, and in the next, he had laboured to infuse into him some particular opinions of his own, which he wished to disseminate through his nephew. Sir George Aston having accidentally called, he was prevailed on to stay, and Dr. Barlow was of the party.

Mr. Tyrrel, by his observations, soon enabled us to discover that his religion had altered nothing but his language. He seemed evidently more fond of controversy than of truth, and the whole turn of his conversation indicated that he derived his religious security rather from the adoption of a party than from the implantation of a new principle. 'His discourse is altered,' said Mr. Stanley to me afterwards, 'but I greatly fear his heart and affections remain unchanged.'

Mr. Stanley contrived, for the sake of his two academical guests, particularly young Tyrrel, to divert the conversation to the subject of learning, more especially clerical learning.

In answer to a remark of mine on the satisfaction I had felt in seeing such a happy union of learning and piety in two clergymen who had lately dined at the Grove, Mr. Stanley said, 'Literature is an excellent thing, when it is not the best thing a man has. It cannot surely be an offence to our Maker to cultivate carefully his highest natural gift, our reason. In pious men it is peculiarly important, as the neglect of such cultivation, in certain individuals, has led to much error in religion, and given much just offence to the irreligious, who are very sharp-sighted to the faults of pious characters. I, therefore truly rejoice to see a higher tone of literature now prevailing, especially in so many of our pious young divines; the deficiency of learning in some of their well-meaning predecessors having served to bring not only themselves, but religion also into contempt, especially with men who have only learning.

Tyrrel. 'I say nothing against the necessity of learning in a lawyer, because it may help him to lead a judge, and to mislead a jury; nor in a physician, because it may advance his credit by enabling him to conceal the deficiencies of his art; nor in a private gentleman, because it may keep him out of worse mischief. But I see no use of learning in the clergy. There is my friend Dr. Barlow. I would willingly give up all his learning, if he would go a little deeper into the doctrines he professes to preach.'

Mr. Stanley. 'I should indeed think Dr. Barlow's various knowledge of little value, did he exhibit the smallest deficiency in the great points to which you allude. But when I am persuaded that his learning is so far from detracting from his piety, that it enables him to render it more extensively useful, I cannot wish him dispossessed of that knowledge which adorns his religion without diminishing its good effects.'

Tyrrel. 'You will allow that those first great publishers of Christianity, the Apostles, had none of this vain learning.'

Stanley. 'It is frequently pleaded by the despisers of learning, that the Apostles were illiterate. The fact is too notorious, and the answer too obvious to require to be dwelt upon. But it is unfortunately adduced to illustrate a position to which it can never apply, the vindication of an unlettered clergy. It is a hacknied remark, but not the less true for being old, that the wisdom of God chose to accomplish the first promulgation of the gospel by illiterate men, to prove that the work was his own, and that the success depended not on the instruments employed, but on the divinity of the truth itself. But if the Almighty chose to establish his religion by miracles, he chooses to carry it on by other means. And he no more sends an ignorant peasant or fisherman to instruct men in Christianity now, than he appointed a Socrates or a Plato to be its publishers at first. As, however, there is a great difference in the situations, so there may be a proportionable difference allowed in the attainments of the clergy. I do not say it is necessary for every village curate to be a profound scholar; but as he may not always remain in obscurity, there is no necessity for his being a contemptible one.'

Sir John. 'What has been said of those who affect to despise birth has been applied also to those who decry learning; neither is ever undervalued except by men who are destitute of them: and it is worthy of observation, that as literature and religion both sunk together in the dark ages, so both emerged at the same auspicious æra.

Mr. Stanley, finding that Dr. Barlow was not forward to embark in a subject which he considered as rather personal, said, 'Is it presumptuous to observe, that though the Apostles were unlettered men, yet those instruments who were

to be employed in services singularly difficult, the Almighty condescended partly to fit for their peculiar work by great human attainments? The Apostle of the Gentiles was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and Moses, who was destined to the high office of a great legislator, was instructed in all the wisdom of the most learned nation then existing. The Jewish law-giver, though under the guidance of inspiration itself, did not fill his station the worse for this preparatory instruction. To how important a use the Apostle converted *his* erudition, we may infer from his conduct in the most learned and polished assembly in the world. He did not unnecessarily exasperate the polite Athenians by coarse upbraiding, or illiterate clamour, but he attacked them on their own ground. With what discriminating wisdom, with what powerful reasoning did he unfold to them that God whom they ignorantly worshipped! With what temper, with what elegance did he expose their shallow theology! Had he been as unacquainted with *their* religion, as they were with *his*, he had wanted the appropriate ground on which to build his instruction. He seized on the inscription of their own pagan altar, as a text from which to preach the doctrines of Christianity. From his knowledge of their errors, he was enabled to advance the cause of truth. He made their poetry, which he quoted, and their mythology which he would not have been able to explode if he had not understood it, a thesis from which to deduce the doctrine of the Resurrection: thus softening their prejudices and letting them see the infinite superiority of that Christianity which he enforced, to the mere learning and mental cultivation on which they so highly valued themselves. By the same sober discretion, accurate reasoning, and graceful elegance, he afterwards obtained a patient hearing, and a favourable judgment from king Agrippa.'

Dr. Barlow. 'It has always appeared to me, that a strong reason why the younger part of a clergyman's life should be in a good measure devoted to learning is, that he may afterwards discover its comparative vanity. It would have been a less difficult sacrifice for St. Paul to profess that he renounced all things for religion, if he had had nothing to renounce; and to count all things as dross in the comparison, if he had had no gold to put in the empty scale. Gregory Nazianzen, one of the most accomplished masters of Greek literature, declared that the chief value which he set upon it was, that in possessing it he had something of worth in itself to esteem as nothing in comparison of Christian truth. And it is delightful to hear Selden and Grotius, and Pascal and Salmasius, whom I may be allowed to quote, without being suspected of professional prejudice, as none of them were clergymen, while they warmly recommended to others, that learning, of which they themselves were the most astonishing examples, at the same time dedicating their lives to the advancement of religion. It is delightful, I say, to hear them acknowledge that their learning was only valuable as it put it in their power to promote Christianity, and to have something to sacrifice for its sake.'

Tyrrel. 'I can willingly allow that a poet, a dramatic poet especially, may study the works of the great critics of antiquity with some profit, but that a Christian writer of sermons can have any just ground for studying a Pagan critic, is to me quite inconceivable.'

Stanley. 'And yet, Mr. Tyrrel, a sermon is a work which demands regularity of plan, as well as a poem. It requires too, something of the same unity, arrangement, divisions and lucid order as a tragedy; something of the exordium and the peroration which belong to the composition of the orator. I do not mean that he is constantly to exhibit all this, but he should always understand it. And a discreet clergyman, especially one who is to preach before auditors of the higher rank, and who, in order to obtain respect from them, wishes to excel in the art of composition, will scarcely be less attentive to form his judgment by some acquaintance with Longinus and Quintilian than a dramatic poet. A writer of verse, it is true, may please to a certain degree by the force of mere genius, and a writer of sermons will instruct by the mere power of his piety; but neither the one nor the other will ever write well, if they do not possess the principles of good writing, and form themselves on the models of good writers.'

'Writing,' said Sir John, 'to a certain degree is an art, or, if you please, a trade. And as no man is allowed to set up in an ordinary trade till he has served a long apprenticeship to its *mysteries*, (the word, I think, used in indentures,) so no man should set up for a writer, till he knows somewhat of the mysteries of the art he is about to practice. He may, after all, if he wants talents, produce a vapid and inefficient book; but possess what talents he may, he will without knowledge, produce a crude and indigested one.'

Tyrrel. 'Still I insist upon it, that in a Christian minister the lustre of learning is tinsel, and human wisdom folly.'

Stanley. 'I am entirely of your opinion, if he rests in his learning as an *end* instead of using it as a *means;* if the fame, or the pleasure, or even the human profit of learning be his ultimate object. Learning in a clergyman without religion is dross, is nothing; not so religion without learning. I am persuaded that much good is done by men who, though deficient in this respect, are abundant in zeal and piety; but the good they do arises from the exertion of their piety, and not from the deficiency of their learning. Their labours are beneficial from the talent they exercise, and not from their want of another talent. The Spirit of God can work, and often does work by feeble instruments; and divine truth by its own omnipotent energy, can effect its own purposes. But particular instances do not go to prove that the instrument ought not to be fitted and polished, and sharpened for its allotted work. Every student should be emulously watchful that he does not diminish the stock of professional credit by his idleness: he should be stimulated to individual exertion, by bearing in mind that the English clergy have always been allowed by foreigners to be the most learned body in the world.'

Dr. Barlow. 'What Mr. Stanley has said of

the value of knowledge, does not at all militate against such fundamental prime truths—'This is eternal life to *know* God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent—I desire to *know* nothing, save Jesus Christ.—The natural man cannot *know* the things of the Spirit of God,' and a hundred other such passages.'

Tyrrel. 'Aye, Doctor, now you talk a little more like a Christian minister. But from the greater part of what has been asserted, you are all of you such advocates for human reason and human learning, as to give an air of paganism to your sentiments.'

Stanley. 'It does not diminish the utility, though it abases the pride of learning, that Christianity did not come into the world by human discovery, or the disquisitions of reason, but by immediate revelation. Those who adopt your way of thinking, Mr. Tyrrel, should bear in mind, that the work of God, in changing the heart, is not intended to supply the place of the human faculties. God expects, in his most highly favoured servants, the diligent exercise of their natural powers; and if any human being has a stronger call for the exercise of wisdom and judgment than another, it is a religious clergyman. Christianity does not supersede the use of natural gifts, but turns them into their proper channel.

'One distinction has often struck me. The enemy of mankind seizes on the soul through the medium of the passions and senses; the divine friend of man addresses him through his rational powers—*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*, says the Apostle.'

Here I ventured to observe, that the highest panegyric bestowed on one of the brightest luminaries of our church, is that his name is seldom mentioned without the epithet *judicious* being prefixed to it. Yet does Hooker want fervour?—Does Hooker want zeal?—Does Hooker want courage in declaring the whole counsel of God?

Sir John. 'I hope we have now no clergyman to whom we may apply the biting sarcasm of Dr. South, on some of the popular but illiterate preachers of the opposite party in his day, that there was all the confusion of Babel, without the gift of tongues.'

Stanley. 'And yet that party produced some great scholars, and many eminently pious men. But look back to that day, and especially to the period a little antecedent to it, at those prodigies of erudition, the old Bishops and other divines of our Church. They were, perhaps, somewhat too profuse of their learning in their discourses, or rather they were so brimful, that they involuntarily overflowed. A juster taste, in our time, avoids that lavish display, which then not only crowded the margin, but forced itself into every part of the body of the work. The display of erudition might be wrong, but one thing is clear, it proved they had it, and as Dryden said, when he was accused of having too much wit, 'after all, it is a good crime.'

'We may justly,' said Dr. Barlow, 'in the refinement of modern taste, censure their prolixity, and ridicule their redundancies; we may smile at their divisions, which are numberless; and at their sub-divisions, which are endless: we may allow that this labour for perspicuity sometimes produced perplexity. But let us confess they always went to the bottom of whatever they embarked in. They ransacked the stores of ancient learning, and the treasures of modern science, not to indulge their vanity by obtruding their acquirements, but to prove, to adorn, and to illustrate the doctrine they delivered. How incredible must their industry have been, when the bare transcript of their voluminous folios seems alone sufficient to have occupied a long life!'

'The method,' said I, 'which they adopted of saying every thing that could be said on all topics, and exhausting them to the very dregs, though it may and does tire the patience of the reader, yet it never leaves him ignorant; and, of two evils, had not an author better be tedious than superficial? From an overflowing vessel you may gather more indeed than you want, but from an empty one you can gather nothing.'

Tyrrel. 'It appears to me that you wish to make a clergyman every thing but a Christian, and to bestow upon him every requisite except faith.'

Stanley. 'God forbid that I should make any comparison between human learning and Christian principle; the one is indeed lighter than the dust of the balance, when weighed against the other. All I contend for is, that they are not incompatible, and that human knowledge, used only in subserviency to that of the Scriptures, may advance the interests of religion. For the better elucidation of those scriptures a clergyman should know not a little of ancient languages. Without some insight into remote history and antiquities, especially the Jewish, he will be unable to explain many of the manners and customs recorded in the sacred volume. Ignorance in some of these points, has drawn many attacks on our religion from sceptical writers. As to a thorough knowledge of ecclesiastical history, it would be superfluous to recommend that, it being the history of his own immediate profession. It is therefore requisite, not only for the general purposes of instruction, but that he may be enabled to guard against modern innovation, by knowing the origin and progress of the various heresies with which the Church in all ages has been infested.

Tyrrel. 'But he may be thoroughly acquainted with all this, and not have one spark of light.'

Dr. Barlow. 'He may indeed with deep concern I allow it. I will go further. The pride of learning, when not subdued by religion may help to extinguish that spark.—Reason has been too much decried by one party, and too much deified by the other. The difference between reason and revelation seems to be the same as between the eye and the light; the one is the organ of vision, the other the source of illumination.'

Tyrrel. 'Take notice, Stanley, that if I can help it, I'll never attend your accomplished clergyman.'

Stanley. (Smiling) 'I have not yet completed the circle of his accomplishment.—Besides what we call book learning, there is another species of knowledge in which some truly good men are sadly deficient; I mean an acquaintance

with human nature. The knowledge of the world, and of Him who made it; the study of the heart of man, and of him, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, enables a minister to excel in the art of instruction; one kind of knowledge reflecting light upon the other. The knowledge of mankind, then, I may venture to assert, is, next to religion, one of the first requisites of a preacher; and I cannot help ascribing the little success which has sometimes attended the ministry of even worthy men, to their want of this grand ingredient. It will diminish the use they might make of the great doctrines of our religion, if they are ignorant of the various modifications of the human character to which those doctrines are to be addressed.

'As no man ever made a true poet without this talent, one may venture to say, that few without it have ever made eminent preachers. Destitute of this, the most elaborate addresses will be only random shot, which if they hit, will be more owing to chance than to skill. Without this knowledge, warned by Christian affection, guided by Christian judgment, and tempered with Christian meekness, a clergyman will not be able in the pulpit to accommodate himself to the various wants of his hearers; without this knowledge, in his private spiritual visits, he will resemble those empirics in medicine who have but one method of treatment for all diseases, and who apply indiscriminately the same pill and the same drop to the various distempers of all ages, sexes, and constitutions. This spirit of accommodation does not consist in falsifying, or abridging, or softening, or disguising, any truth; but in applying truth in every form, communicating it in every direction, and diverting it into every channel. Some good men seem sadly to forget that precept—*making a difference*—for they act as if all characters were exactly alike.'

Tyrrel. 'You talk as if you would wish clergymen to depart from the singleness of truth, and preach two gospels.'

Stanley. 'Far from it. But though truth is single, the human character is multiplied almost to infinity, and cannot be addressed with advantage if it be not well understood. I am ashamed of having said so much on such a subject in presence of Dr. Barlow, who is silent through delicacy. I will only add, that a learned young clergyman is not driven for necessary relaxation to improper amusements. His mind will be too highly set, to be satisfied with those light diversions which purloin time without affording the necessary renovation to the body and spirits, which is the true and lawful end of all amusement. In all circumstances, learning confers dignity on his character. It enables him to raise the tone of general conversation, and is a safe kind of medium with persons of a higher class who are not religious; and it will always put it in his power to keep the standard of intercourse above the degrading topics of diversion, sports and vulgar gossip.'

Dr. Barlow. 'You see, Mr. Tyrrel, that a prudent combatant thinks only of defending himself on that side where he is assaulted. If Mr. Stanley's antagonist had been a vehement advocate for clerical learning as the great essential of his profession, he would have been the first to caution him against the pride and inflation which often attend learning, when not governed by religion.—Learning not so governed might injure Christian humility, and thus become a far more formidable enemy to religion than that which it was called in to oppose.'

Sir John said, smiling, 'I will not apply to the clergy, what Rasselas says to Imlac, after he had been enumerating the numberless qualities necessary to the perfection of the poetic art—'Thou hast convinced me that no man can be a poet;'—but if all Stanley says be just, I will venture to assert that no common share of industry and zeal will qualify a young student for that sacred profession. I have indeed no experience on the subject, as it relates to the clerical order; but I conceive in general, that learning is the best human preservative of virtue; that it safely fills up leisure, and honourably adorns life, even where it does not form the business of it.'

'Learning too,' said I, 'has this strong recommendation, that it is the offspring of a most valuable virtue, I mean industry; a quality on which I am ashamed to see Pagans frequently set a higher value than we seem to do.'

'I believe indeed,' replied Sir John, 'that the ancients had a higher idea of industry and severe application than we have. Tully calls them the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, and Alexander said that slaves might indulge in sloth, but that it was a most royal thing to labour.'

Stanley. 'It has been the error of sensible men of the world, to erect talents and learning into idols, which they would have universally and exclusively worshipped.—This has perhaps driven some religious men into such a fear of over cultivating learning, that they do not cultivate it at all. Hence the intervals between their religious employments, and intervals there must be while we are vested with these frail bodies, are languid and insipid, wasted in trifling and sauntering. Nay, it is well if this disoccupation of the intellect do not lead from sloth to improper indulges.'

'You are perfectly right,' said Sir John; 'our worthy friend Thompson is a living illustration of your remark. He was at college with us; he brought from thence a competent share of knowledge; has a fair understanding, and the manners of a gentleman. For several years past he has not only adopted a religious character, but is truly pious. As he is much in earnest, he very properly assigns a considerable portion of his time to religious reading. But as he is of no profession, the intermediate hours often hang heavy on his hands. He continues to live in some measure in the world, without the inconsistency of entering into its pursuits; but having renounced the study of human learning, and yet accustoming himself to mix occasionally with general society, he has few subjects in common with his company, but is dull and silent in all rational conversation, of which religion is not the professed object. He takes so little interest in any literary or political discussion, however useful, that it is evident nothing but his good breeding prevents his falling asleep. At the same time he scruples not to violate con-

sistency in another respect, for his table is so elaborately luxurious, that it seems as if he were willing to add to the pleasures of sense, what he deduets from those of intelleet.'

'I have often thought,' said Mr. Stanley, 'of sending him Dr. Barrow's *three sermons on industry in our calling as Christians, industry as gentlemen, and industry as scholars;* which sermons, by the way, I intended to have made my son read at least once a year, had he lived, that he might see the consisteney, the compatability, nay, the analogy of the two latter with the former. I wish the spirit of these three discourses was infused into every gentleman, every scholar, and every Christian through the land. For my own part I should have sedulously laboured to make my son a sound scholar whilo I should have laboured still more sedulously to convince him that the value of learning depends solely on the purposes to which it is devoted. I would have a Christian gentleman able to beat the world at its own weapons, and eonvince it, that it is not from penury of mind, nor inability to distinguish himself in other matters, that he applies himself to seek that wisdom which is from above: that he does not fly to religion as a shelter from the ignominy of ignoranee, but from a deep conviction of the comparative vanity of that very learning, which he yet is so assiduous to aequire.'

During this eonversation, it was amusing to observe the different impressions made on the minds of our two college guests. Young Tyrrel, who, with moderate parts and slender application, had been taught to adopt some of his unele's dogmas, as the cheapest way of being wise, greedily swallowed his eulogium of clerical ignorance, which the young man seemed to feel as a vindication of his own neglected studies, and an encouragement to his own mediocrity of intellect. While the interesting young baronet, though silent through modesty, discovered in his intelligent eyes, evident marks of satisfaction, in hearing that literature, for which he was every day acquiring a higher relish, warmly recommended as the best pursuit of a gentlemen, by the two men in the world, for whose judgment he entertained the highest reverence. At the same time it raised his veneration for Christian piety when he saw it so sedulously practised by these advocates for human learning

CHAP. XXII.

During these conversations, I remarked that Lucilla, though she commonly observed the most profound silence, had her attention always riveted on the speaker. If that speaker was Dr. Barlow, or her father, or any one whom she thought entitled to particular respeet, she gently laid down her work, and as quietly resumed it when they had done speaking.

I observed to Sir John Belfield, afterwards, as we were walking together, how modestly flattering her manner was when any of us were reading! How intelligent her silence! How well-bred her attention!

'I have often contrasted it,' replied he, 'with the manner of some other ladies of my acquaintance, who are sometimes of our quiet evening party. When one is reading history, or any ordinary book aloud to them, I am always pleased that they should pursue their little employments. It amuses themselves and gives ease and familiarity to the social eircle. But while I have been reading, as has sometimes happened, a passage of the highest sublimity, or most tender interest, I own I feel a little indignant to see the shuttle plied with as eager assiduity, as if the destinies themselves were weaving the thread. I have known a lady take up the candlestick to search for her netting-pin, in the midst of Cato's soliloquy; or stoop to pick up her seisrars while Hamlet says to the ghost, 'I'll go no farther.' I remember another who would whisper aeross the table to borrow thread while Lear has been raving in the storm, or Macbeth starting at the spirit of Banquo; and make signs for a thread-paper, while cardinal Beaufort 'dies, and makes no sign.' Nay, once I remember when I was with much agitation hurrying through the gazette of the battle of Trafalgar, while I pronouneed almost agonized, the last memorable words of the immortal Nelson, I heard one lady whisper to another, that she had broke her needle.'

'It would be diffieult to determine, replied I, whether this inattention most betrays want of sense, of feeling, or of good breeding. The habit of attention should be carefully formed in early life, and then the mere force of eustom would teach these ill-bred women 'to assume the virtue if they have it not.'

The family at the Grove was, with us, an inexhaustible topic whenever we met. I observed to Sir John, 'that I had sometimes observed in charitable families a display, a bustle, a kind of animal restlessness, a sort of meehanical *besoin* to be charitably busy. That though they fulfilled conscientiously one part of the Apostolic injunction, that of 'giving,' yet they failed in the other elause, that of doing it 'with simplicity.' 'Yes,' replied he, 'I visit a charitable lady in town, who almost puts me out of love with benevolence. Her own bounties form the entire subjeet of her conversation. As soon as the breakfast is removed, the table is always regularly covered with plans, and proposals, and subscription papers. This display conveniently performs the three-fold offiee of publishing her own charities, furnishing subjects of altercation, and raising contributions on the visitor. Her narratives really cost me more than my subscription. She is so full of debate, and detail, and opposition; she makes you read so many papers of her own drawing up, and so many answers to the schemes of other people, and she has so many objections to every other person's mode of doing good, and so many arguments to prove that her own is the best, that she appears less like a benevolent lady than a chicaning attorney.'

'Nothing,' said I, 'corrects this bustling bounty so completely, as when it is mixed up with religion; I should rather say, as when it flows from religion. This motive, so far from diminishing the energy, augments it; but it

cures the display, and converts the irritation into a principle. It transfers the activity from the tongue to the heart. It is the only sort of charity which 'blesses twice.' All charity, indeed, blesses the receiver; but the blessing promised to the giver, I have sometimes trembled to think, may be forfeited even by a generous mind, from ostentation and parade in the manner, and want of purity in the motive.'

'In Stanley's family,' replied he, in a more serious tone, 'I have met with a complete refutation of that favourite maxim of the world, that religion is a dull thing itself, and makes its professors gloomy and morose. Charles! I have often frequented houses where pleasure was the avowed object of idolatry. But to see the votaries of the 'reeling goddess,' after successive nights passed in her temples! to see the languor, the listlessness, the discontent—you would rather have taken them for her victims than her worshippers. So little mental vivacity, so little gayety of the heart! In short, after no careless observation, I am compelled to declare, that I never saw two forms less alike than those of Pleasure and Happiness.'

'Your testimony, Sir John,' said I, 'is of great weight in a case of which you are so experienced a judge. What a different scene do we now contemplate! Mr. Stanley seems to have diffused his own spirit through the whole family. What makes his example of such efficacy is, that he considers the Christian *temper* as so considerable a part of Christianity. This temper seems to imbue his whole soul, pervade his whole conduct, and influence his whole conversation. I see every day some fresh occasion to admire his candour, his humility, his constant reference, not as a topic of discourse, but as a principle of conduct, to the gospel, as the standard by which actions are weighed. His conscientious strictness of speech, his serious reproof of calumnies, his charitable construction of every case which has two sides; 'his simplicity and godly sincerity;' his rule of referring all events to providential direction, and his invariable habit of vindicating the divine goodness under dispensations apparently the most unfavourable.'

Here Sir John left me, and I could not forbear pursuing the subject in soliloquy as I proceeded in my walk.—I reflected with admiration that Mr. Stanley in his religious conversation, rendered himself so useful, because instead of the uniform nostrum of *the drop and the pill*, he applied a different class of arguments as the case required, to objectors to the different parts of Christianity; to ill informed persons who adopted a partial gospel without understanding it as a scheme, or embracing it as a whole.—To those who allow its truth merely on the same ground of evidence that establishes the truth of any other well authenticated history; and who, satisfied with this external evidence, not only do not feel its power on their own heart, but deny that it has any such influence on the hearts of others;—to those who believe the gospel to be a mere code of ethics;—to their antipodes who assert that Christ has lowered the requisitions of the law;—to Lady Belfield who rests on her charities,—Sir John on his correctness,—Lady Aston on her austerities;—to this man who values himself solely on the stoutness of his orthodoxy; to another on the firmness of his integrity; to a third on the peculiarities of his party, he addresses himself with a particular view to their individual errors. This he does with such a discriminating application to the case, as might lead the ill informed to suspect that he was not equally earnest in those other points, which not being attacked he does not feel himself called on to defend, but which, had they been attacked, he would then have defended with equal zeal as relative to the discussion. To crown all, I contemplated that affectionate warmth of heart, that sympathizing kindness, that tenderness of feeling, of which the gay and the thoughtless fancy that they themselves possess the monopoly, while they make over harshness, austerity, and want of charity to religious men, as their inseparable characteristics.

These qualities excite in my heart a feeling compounded of veneration, and of love. And oh! how impossible it is, even in religion itself, to be disinterested! All these excellencies I contemplate with a more heart-felt delight, from the presumptuous hope that I may one day have the felicity of connecting myself still more intimately with them.

CHAP. XXIII.

Some days after, while we were conversing over our tea, we heard the noise of a carriage; and Mr. Stanley looking out from a bow window in which he and I were sitting, said, it was Lady and Miss Rattle driving up the avenue. He had just time to add, 'these are our *fine* neighbours. They always make us a visit as soon as they come down, while all the gloss and lustre of London is fresh upon them. We have always our regular routine of conversation. While her Ladyship is pouring the fashions into Mrs. Stanley's ear, Miss Rattle, who is about Phœbe's age, entertains my daughters and me with the history of her own talents and acquirements.'

Here they entered. After a few compliments, Lady Rattle seated herself between Lady Belfield and Mrs. Stanley, at the upper end of the room; while the fine, sprightly, boisterous girl of fifteen or sixteen threw herself back on the sofa at nearly her full length, between Mr. Stanley and me, the Miss Stanleys and Sir John sitting near us, within hearing of her lively loquacity.

'Well, Miss Amelia,' said Mr. Stanley, 'I dare say you have made good use of your time this winter; I suppose you have ere now completed the whole circle of the arts. Now let me hear what you have been doing, and tell me your whole achievements, as frankly as you used to do when you were a very little girl.' 'Indeed,' replied she, 'I have not been idle, if I must speak the truth. One has so many things to learn you know. I have gone on with my French and Italian of course, and I am beginning German. Then comes my drawing-master, he teaches me to paint flowers and shells, and

to draw ruins and buildings, and to take views. He is a good soul, and is finishing a set of pictures, and half a dozen fire screens which I began for mamma. He *does* help me to be sure, but indeed, I do some of it myself, don't I, mamma?' calling out to her mother, who was too much absorbed in her own narratives to attend to her daughter.

'And then,' pursued the young prattler, 'I learn varnishing, and gilding, and japanning. And next winter I shall learn modelling, and etching, and engraving in mezzotinto and aquatinta, for Lady Di. Dash learns etching, and mamma says, as I shall have a better fortune than Lady Di, she vows I shall learn every thing she does. Then I have a dancing-master, who teaches me the Scotch and Irish steps; and another who teaches me attitudes, and I shall soon learn the waltz, and I can stand longer on one leg already than Lady Di. Then I have a singing-master, and another who teaches me the harp, and another for the piano-forte. And what little time I can spare from these *principal* things, I give by odd minutes to ancient and modern history, and geography, and astronomy, and grammar, and botany. Then I attend lectures on chemistry, and experimental philosophy, for as I am not yet come out, I have not much to do in the evenings; and mamma says, there is nothing in the world that money can pay for, but what I shall learn. And I run so delightfully fast from one thing to another that I am never tired. What makes it so pleasant is, as soon as I am fairly set in with one master, another arrives. I should hate to be long at the same thing. But I shan't have a great while to work so hard, for as soon as I come out, I shall give it all up, except music and dancing.'

All this time Lucilla sat listening with a smile, behind the complacency of which she tried to conceal her astonishment. Phœbe, who had less self-controul, was on the very verge of a broad laugh. Sir John, who had long lived in a soil where this species is indigenous, had been too long accustomed to all its varieties, to feel much astonishment at this specimen, which, however, he sat contemplating with philosophical, but discriminating coolness.

For my own part, my mind was wholly absorbed in contrasting the coarse manners of this voluble and intrepid, but good humoured girl, with the quiet cheerful, and unassuming elegance of Lucilla.

'I should be afraid, Miss Rattle,' said Mr. Stanley, 'if you did not look in such blooming health, that with all these incessant labours, you did not allow yourself time for rest. Surely you never sleep?'

'Oh yes, that I do, and eat too,' said she; 'my life is not quite so hard and moping as you fancy. What between shopping and morning visits with mamma, and seeing sights, and the park, and the gardens, (which, by the way, I hate, except on a Sunday when they are crowded,) and our young balls, which are four or five in a week after Easter, and mamma's music parties at home, I contrive to enjoy myself tolerably; though after I have been presented, I shall be a thousand time better off, for then I shan't have a moment to myself. Won't that be delightful?' said she, twitching my arm, rather roughly, by way of recalling my attention, which however had seldom wandered.

As she had now run out her London materials, the news of the neighbourhood next furnished a subject for her volubility. After she had mentioned in detail one or two stories of low village gossip; while I was wondering how she should come at them, she struck me dumb by quoting the coachman as her authority This enigma was soon explained. The mother and daughter having exhausted their different topics of discourse nearly at the same time, they took their leave, in order to enrich every family in the neighbourhood, on whom they were going to call, with the same valuable knowledge which they had imparted to us.

Mr. Stanley conducted Lady Rattle, and led her daughter; but as I offered to hand her into the carriage, she started back with a sprightly motion, and screamed out, 'Oh no, not in the inside, pray help me up to the *Dickey*. I always protest I never *will* ride with any body but the coachman, if we go ever so far.' So saying, with a spring which showed how much she despised my assistance, the little hoyden was seated in a moment, nodding familiarly at me, as if I had been an old friend.

Then with a voice, emulating that which, when passing by Charing-Cross, I have heard issued from an over stuffed stage vehicle, when a robust sailor has thrust his body out at the window, the fair creature vociferated, 'Drive on, coachman!' He obeyed, and turning round her whole person, she continued nodding at me till they were out of sight.

'Here is a mass of accomplishments,' said I, 'without one particle of mind, one ray of common sense, or one shade of delicacy!—Surely somewhat less time, and less money might have sufficed to qualify a companion for the coachman!'

'What poor creatures are we men,' said I to Mr. Stanley as soon as he came in! 'We think it very well, if after much labour and long application we can attain to one or two of the innumerable acquirements of this gay little girl. Nor is this I find the rare achievement of one happy genius. There is a whole class of these miraculous females.—Miss Rattle

'Is knight o' th' shire, and represents them all.'

'It is only young ladies,' replied he, 'whose vast abilities, whose mighty grasp of mind, can take in every thing. Among men, learned men, talents are commonly directed into some one channel, and fortunate is he, who in that one attains to excellence. The linguist is rarely a painter, nor is the mathematician often a poet. Even in one profession there are divisions and subdivisions.—The same lawyer never thinks of presiding both in the King's Bench, and in the Court of Chancery. The science of healing is not only divided into its three distinct branches, but in the profession of Surgery only, how many are the subdivisions! One professor undertakes the eye, another the ear, and a third the teeth. But woman, ambitious, aspiring, universal, triumphant, glorious woman, even at the age of a school boy, encounters the whole

range of arts, attacks the whole circle of sciences!'

'A mighty maze, and *quite* without a plan,' replied Sir John, laughing. 'But the truth is, the misfortune does not so much consist in their learning every thing as in their knowing nothing; I mean nothing well. When gold is beaten out so wide, the lamina must needs be very thin. And you may observe, tho more valuable attainments, though they are not to be left out of the modish plan, are kept in the back ground; and are to be picked up out of the odd remnants of that time, the sum of which is devoted to frivolous accomplishments. All this gay confusion of acquirements, these holiday splendours, this superfluity of enterprize, enumerated in the first part of her catalogue, is the *real business* of education; the latter part is incidental, and if taught is not learnt.

'As to the lectures so boastfully mentioned, they may doubtless be made very useful subsidiaries to instruction. They most happily illustrate book-knowledge; but if the pupil's instruction in private do not precede, and keep pace, with these useful public exhibitions, her knowledge will be only presumptuous ignorance. She may learn to talk of oxygen and hydrogen, and deflagration, and trituration, but she will know nothing of the science except the terms. It is not knowing the name of his tools that makes an artist; and I should be afraid of the vanity which such superficial information would communicate to a mind, not previously prepared, nor exercised at home in corresponding studies. But as Miss Rattle honestly confessed, as soon as she *comes out* all these things will die away of themselves, and dancing and music will be almost all which will survive her multifarious pursuits.'

'I look upon the great predominance of music in female education,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to be the source of more mischief than is suspected; not from any evil in the thing itself, but from its being such a gulph of time, as really to leave little room for solid acquisitions. I love music, and were it only cultivated as an amusement, should commend it. But the monstrous proportion, or rather disproportion of life which it swallows up, even in many religious families, and this is the chief subject of my regret, has converted an innocent diversion into a positive sin. I question if many gay men devote more hours in a day to idle purposes, than the daughters of many pious parents spend in this amusement. All these hours the mind lies fallow, improvement is at a stand, if even it does not retrograde. Nor is the shreds and scraps of time, stolen in the intervals of better things, that is so devoted; but it is the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous, the spirits light, the intellect awake and fresh, and the whole being wound up by the refreshment of sleep, and animated by the return of light and life, for nobler services.'

'If,' said Sir John, music were cultivated to embellish retirement, to be practised where pleasures are scarce, and good performers are not to be had, it would quite alter the case. But the truth is, these highly taught ladies are not only living in public where they constantly hear the most exquisite professors, but they have them also at their own houses. Now one of these two things must happen; Either the performance of the lady will be so inferior as not to be worth hearing on the comparison, or so good that she will fancy herself the rival, instead of the admirer of the performer, whom she had better pay and praise than fruitlessly emulate.'

'This anxious struggle to reach the unattainable excellence of the professor,' said Mr. Stanley, 'often brings to my mind the contest for victory between the ambitious nightingale and the angry lunatist in the beautiful Prolusion of Strada.'

'It is to the predominance of this talent,' replied I, 'that I ascribe that want of companionableness of which I complain. The excellence of musical performance is a decorated screen, behind which all defects in domestic knowledge, in taste, judgment and literature, and the talents which make an elegant companion, are credibly concealed.

I have made,' said Sir John, 'another remark. Young ladies, who from apparent shyness do not join in the conversation of a small select party, are always ready enough to entertain them with music on the slightest hint. Surely it is equally modest to *say* as to *sing*, especially to sing those melting strains we sometimes hear sung, and which we should be ashamed to hear said. After all, how few hours are there in a week, in which a man engaged in the pursuits of life, and a woman in the duties of a family wish to employ in music. I am fond of it myself, and Lady Belfield plays admirably; but with the cares inseparable from the conscientious discharge of her duty with so many children, how little time has she to play, or I to listen! But there is no day, no hour, no meal in which I do not enjoy in her the ever ready pleasure of an elegant and interesting companion. A man of sense, when all goes smoothly, wants to be entertained; under vexation to be soothed; in difficulties to be counselled; in sorrow to be comforted. In a mere artist can he reasonably look for these resources?'

'Only figure to yourself,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'my six girls daily playing their four hours a piece, which is now a moderate allowance! As we have but one instrument they must be at it in succession, day and night, to keep pace with their neighbours. If I may compare light things with serious ones, it would resemble,' added he, smiling, 'the perpetual psalmody of good Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, who had relays of musicians every six hours to sing the whole Psalter through every day and night! I mean not to ridicule that holy man; but my girls thus keeping their useless vigils in turn, we should only have the melody without any of the piety. No, my friend! I will have but two or three singing birds to cheer my little grove. If all the world are performers, there will soon be no hearers. Now, as I am resolved in my own family that some shall listen, I will have but few to perform.'

'It must be confessed,' said Sir John, 'that Miss Rattle is no servile imitator of the vapid tribe of the superficially accomplished. Her violent animal spirits prevent her from growing

smooth by attrition. She is as rough and angular as rusticity itself could have made her. Where strength of character, however, is only marked by the worst concomitant of strength, which is coarseness, I should almost prefer insanity itself.'

'I should a little fear,' said I, 'that I lay too much stress on companionableness, on the *positive duty of being agreeable at home*, had I not early learnt the doctrine from my father, and seen it exemplified so happily in the practice of my mother.'

'I entirely agree with you, Charles,' said Mr. Stanley, 'as to the absolute *morality* of being agreeable, and even entertaining in one's own family circle. Nothing so soon and so certainly wears out the happiness of married persons, as that too common bad effect of familiarity, the sinking down into dulness and insipidity; neglecting to keep alive the flame by the delicacy which first kindled it; want of vigilance in keeping the temper cheerful by Christian discipline, and the faculties bright by constant use. Mutual affection decays of itself, even where there is no great moral turpitude, without mutual endeavours, not only to improve, but to amuse.

'This,' continued he, 'is one of the great arts of *home enjoyment*. That it is so little practised accounts in a good measure for the undomestic turn of too many married persons. The man meets abroad with amusement, and the woman with attentions, to which they are not accustomed at home. Whereas a capacity to please, on the one part, and a disposition to be pleased on the other, in their own house, would make most visits appear dull. But then the disposition and the capacity must be cultivated antecedent to marriage. A woman whose whole education has been rehearsal, will always be dull, except she lives on the stage, constantly displaying what she has been sedulously acquiring. Books, on the contrary, well chosen books, do not lead to exhibition. The knowledge a woman acquires in private desires no witnesses; the possession is the pleasure. It improves herself, it embellishes her family society, it entertains her husband, it informs her children. The gratification is cheap, is safe, is always to be had at home.'

'It is superfluous,' said Sir John, 'to decorate women so highly for early youth; youth is itself a decoration. We mistakenly adorn most that part of life which least requires it, and neglect to provide for that which will want it most. It is for that sober period, when life has lost its freshness, the passions their intenseness, and the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing. Our wisdom would be to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a store of notions, ideas, principles, and habits, which may preserve, or transfer to the mind that affection, which was at first partly attracted by the person. But to add a vacant mind to a form which has ceased to please; to provide no subsidiary aid to beauty while it lasts, and especially no substitute when it is departed, is to render life comfortless, and marriage dreary.'

'The reading of a cultivated woman,' said Mr. Stanley, 'commonly occupies less time than the music of a musical woman, or the idleness of an indolent woman, or the dress of a vain woman, or the dissipation of a fluttering woman, she is therefore likely to have more leisure for her duties, as well as more inclination, and a sounder judgment for performing them. But, pray observe, that I assume my reading woman to be a religious woman; and I will not answer for the effect of a literary vanity, more than for that of any other vanity, in a mind not habitually disciplined by Christian principle, the only safe and infallible antidote for knowledge of every kind.

Before we had finished our conversation, we were interrupted by the arrival of the post. Sir John eagerly opened the newspaper; but, instead of gratifying our impatience with the intelligence for which we panted from the glorious Spaniards, he read a paragraph which stated 'that Miss Denham had eloped with Signior Squallini, that they were on their way to Scotland, and that Lady Denham had been in fits ever since.'

Lady Belfield, with her usual kindness, was beginning to express how much she pitied her old acquaintance. 'My dear Caroline,' said Sir John, 'there is too much substantial and inevitable misery in the world, for you to waste much compassion on this foolish woman. Lady Denham has little reason to be surprised at an event which all reasonable people must have anticipated. Provoking and disgraceful as it is, what has she to blame but her own infatuation? This Italian was the associate of all her pleasures; the constant theme of her admiration. He was admitted when her friends were excluded. The girl was continually hearing that music was the best gift, and that Signior Squallini was the best gifted. 'Miss Denham,' added he laughing, 'had more wit than your Strada's nightingale. Instead of dropping down dead on the lute for envy, she thought it better to run away with the lutanist for love. I pity the poor girl, however, who has furnished such a commentary to our text, and who is rather the victim of a wretched education than of her own bad propensities.'

CHAP. XXIV.

I HAD generally found that a Sunday passed in a visit was so heavy a day, that I had been accustomed so to arrange my engagements, as commonly to exclude this from the days spent from home. I had often found that even where the week had been pleasantly occupied, the necessity of passing several hours of a season peculiarly designed for religious purposes, with people whose habits have little similarity with our own, either draws one into their relaxed mode of getting rid of the day, or drives one to a retirement, which having an unsociable appearance, is liable to the reproach of austerity and gloom.

The case was quite different at Stanley Grove. The seriousness was without severity, and the cheerfulness had no mixture of levity. The family seemed more than usually animated, and there was a variety in the religious pursuits of

the young people enlivened by intervals of cheerful and improving conversation, which peculiarly struck Lady Belfield. She observed to me that the difficulty of getting through the Sunday, without any mixture of worldly occupations or amusements on the one hand, or of disgust and weariness on the other, was among the many right things which she had never been able to accomplish in her own family.

As we walked from church on Sunday, Miss Stanley told me that her father does not approve the habit of criticising the sermon. He says that the custom of pointing out the faults cannot be maintained, without the custom of watching for them; that it gives the attention a wrong turn, and leads the hearer only to treasure up such passages as may serve for animadversion, and a display, not of Christian temper, but of critical skill. If the general tenor and principle be right, that is the main point they are to look to, and not to hunt for philological errors. That the hearer would do well to observe, whether it is not 'he that sleeps,' as often at least, as 'Homer nods:' a remark exemplified at church, as often as on the occasion which suggested it. That a critical spirit is the worst that can be brought out of church, being a symptom of an unhumbled mind, and an evidence, that whatever the sermon may have done for others, it has not benefitted the caviller.

Here Mr. Stanley joined us. I found he did not encourage his family to take down the sermon. 'It is no disparagement,' said he, 'to the discourse preached, to presume that there may be as good already printed. Why therefore not read the printed sermon at home in the evening, instead of that, by which you ought to have been improving while it was delivering? If it be true that *faith cometh by hearing*, an inferior sermon, 'coming warm and instant from the heart,' assisted by all the surrounding solemnities which make a sermon *heard* so different from one *read*, may strike more forcibly than an abler discourse coolly perused at home. In writing, the mechanical act must necessarily lessen the effect to the writer, and to the spectator it diminishes the dignity of the scene, and seems like short-hand writers taking down a trial.'

'But that my daughters may not plead this as an excuse for inattention,' continued he, 'I make it a part of their evening duty to repeat what they retain, separately to me in my library. The consciousness that this repetition will be required of them, stimulates their diligence; and the exercise itself not only strengthens the memory, but habituates to serious reflection.'

At tea, Phœbe, a charming warm-hearted creature, but who, now and then carried away by the impulse of the moment, forgets habits and prohibitions, said, 'I think, papa, Dr. Barlow was rather dull to-day. There was nothing new in the sermon.' 'My dear,' replied her father, 'we do not go to church to hear news. Christianity is no novelty; and though it is true that we go to be instructed, yet we require to be reminded full as much as to be taught. General truths are what we all acknowledge, and all forget. We acknowledge them, because a general assent of the understanding costs but little; and we forget them, because the remembrance would force upon the conscience a great deal of practical labour. To believe, and remember, and act upon, common, undisputed, general truths, is the most important part of religion. This, though in fact very difficult, is overlooked, on account of its being supposed very easy. To keep up in the heart a lively impression of a few plain momentous truths, is of more use than the ablest discussion of an hundred controverted points.

'Now tell me, Phœbe, do you really think that you have remembered and practised all the instructions that you have received from Dr. Barlow's sermons last year? If you have, though you will have a better right to be critical, you will be less disposed to be so. If you have not, do not complain that the sermon is not new, till you have made all possible use of the old ones; which if you had done, you would have acquired so much humility, that you would meekly listen even to what you already know. But however the discourse may have been superfluous to such deep divines as Miss Phœbe Stanley, it will be very useful to me, and to other hearers who are not so wise.'

Poor Phœbe blushed up to her ears; tears rushed into her eyes. She was so overcome with shame that, regardless of the company, she flew into her father's arms, and softly whispered that if he would forgive her foolish vanity, she would never again be above being taught. The fond, but not blind father, withdrew with her. Lucilla followed with looks of anxious love.

During their short absence, Mrs. Stanley said, 'Lucilla is so practically aware of the truth of her father's observation, that she often says she finds as much advantage as pleasure in teaching the children at her school. This elementary instruction obliges her continually to recur to first principles, to keep constantly uppermost in her mind those great truths contained in the articles of our belief, the commandments, and the prayer taught by our Redeemer. This perpetual simplifying of religion, she assures me, keeps her more humble, fixes her attention on the fundamental truths, and makes her more indifferent to controverted points.'

In a few minutes Mr. Stanley and his daughters returned cheerful and happy: Lucilla smiling like the angel of peace and love.

'If I were not afraid,' said Lady Belfield, 'of falling under the same censure with my friend Phœbe,' smiling on the sweeet girl, 'I should venture to say that I thought the sermon rather too severe.'

'Do not be afraid, Madam,' replied Mr. Stanley: 'though I disapprove that cheap and cruel criticism which makes a man *an offender for a word*, yet discussion does not necessarily involve censoriousness; so far from it, it is fair to discuss whatever seems to be doubtful, and I shall be glad to hear your Ladyship's objections.

'Well then,' replied she, in the most modest tone and accent, 'with all my reverence for Dr. Barlow, I thought him a little unreasonable in seeming to expect universal goodness from creatures whom he yet insisted were fallen creatures.'

'Perhaps, Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'you

mistook his meaning, for he appeared to me perfectly consistent, not only with himself, but with his invariable rule and guide, the Scriptures. Sanctification, will you allow me to use so serious a word, however imperfect, must be universal. It is not the improvement of any one faculty, or quality, or temper, which divines mean, when they say we are renewed in part, so much as that the change is not perfect, the holiness is not complete in *any* part, or power, or faculty, though progressive in all. He who earnestly desires an universal victory over sin, knows which of his evil dispositions or affections it is, that is yet unsubdued. This rebellious enemy he vigilantly sets himself to watch against, to struggle with, and, through divine grace, to conquer. The test of his sincerity does not so much consist in avoiding many faults to which he has no temptation, as in conquering that one to which his natural bent and bias forcibly impels him.'

Lady Belfield said, 'But is it not impossible to bring every part of our nature under this absolute dominion? Suppose a man is very passionate and yet very charitable; would you look upon that person to be in a dangerous state?'

'It is not my province, Madam, to decide,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'God,' as Bishop Sanderson says, 'reserves this *royalty* to himself, of being the searcher of hearts.' I cannot judge how far he resists anger, nor what are his secret struggles against it.—God, who expects not perfection, expects sincerity. Though complete, unmixed goodness is not to be attained in this imperfect state, yet the earnest desire after it is the only sure criterion of the sincerity we profess. If the man you allude to does not watch and pray, and strive against the passion of anger, which is his natural infirmity, I should doubt whether any of his affections were really renewed: and I should fear that his charity was rather a mere habitual feeling, though a most amiable one, than a Christian grace. He indulges in charity, because it is a constitutional bias, and costs him nothing. He indulges in passion because it is a natural bias also; and to set about a victory over it would cost him a great deal. This should put him on a strict self-examination; when he would probably find that, while he gives the uncontrolled reins to any one wrong inclination, his religion, even when he does right things, is questionable. True religion is seated in the heart: that is the centre from which all the lines of right practice must diverge. It is the great duty and chief business of a Christian to labour to make all his affections, with all their motives, tendencies, and operations, subservient to the word and will of God. His irregular passions, which are still apt to start out into disorder, will require vigilance to the end.—He must not think all is safe, because the more tractable ones are not rebellious; but he may entertain a cheerful hope, when those which were once rebellious are become tractable.'

'I feel the importance of what you say,' returned Lady Belfield; 'but I feel also my utter inability to set about it.'

'My dear Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'this is the best and most salutary feeling you can have. That very consciousness of inefficacy will, I trust, drive you to the fountain of all strength and power; it will quicken your faith and animate your prayer; faith which is the habitual principle of confidence in God; and prayer, which is the exercise of that principle toward Him who is the object of it.'

'But, Dr. Barlow,' said Lady Belfield, 'was so discouraging! He seemed to intimate, as if the conflict of a Christian with sin must be as lasting as his life; whereas I had hoped that victory once obtained, was obtained forever.'

'The *strait gate*,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'is only the entrance of religion; the *narrow way* is a continued course. The Christian life, my dear Lady Belfield, is not a point but a progress. It is precisely in the race of Christianity as in the race of human glory. Julius Cæsar and St. Paul describe their respective warfares in nearly the same terms.—*We should count nothing done, while any thing remains undone*,* says the Warrior.—*Not counting myself to have attained—forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing forward to those which are before*, says the Apostle. And it is worth remarking, that they both made the disqualifying observation after attainments almost incredible. As there was no being a hero by any idler way, so there is no being a Christian by any easier road. The necessity of pursuit is the same in both cases, though the objects pursued differ as widely as the vanities of time from the riches of eternity.

'Do not think, my dear Madam,' added Mr. Stanley, 'that I am erecting myself into a censor, much less into a model. The corruptions which I lament, I participate. The deficiencies which I deplore, I feel. Not only when I look abroad, am I persuaded of the general prevalence of evil by what I see; but when I look into my own heart, my conviction is confirmed by what I experience. I am conscious, not merely of frailties, but of sins. I will not hypocritically accuse myself of gross offences which I have not temptation to commit, and from the commission of which, motives inferior to religion would preserve me. But I am continually humbled in detecting mixed motives in almost all I do. Such strugglings of pride with my endeavours after humility! Such irresolution in my firmest purposes! So much imperfection in my best actions! So much want of simplicity in my purest designs! Such fresh shoots of selfishness where I had hoped the plant itself had been eradicated! Such frequent deadness in duty! Such coldness in my affections! Such infirmity of will! Such proneness to earth in my highest aspiration after heaven! All these you see would hardly make in the eyes of those who want Christian discernment, very gross sins; yet they prove demonstrably the root of sin in the heart, and the infection of nature tainting my best resolves.'

'The true Christian,' said I, when Mr. Stanley had done speaking, 'extracts humility from the very circumstance which raises pride in the irreligious. The sight of any enormity in another, makes the mere moralist proud that he is

* Nil actum reputans dum quod superesset agendum. —Lucan.

exempt from it, while the religious man is humbled from a view of the sinfulness of that nature he partakes, a nature which admits of such excesses, and from which excesses he knows that he himself is preserved by divine grace alone. I have often observed that comparison is the aliment of pride in the worldly man, and of self-abasement in the Christian.'

Poor Lady Belfield looked comforted on finding that her friend Mr. Stanley was not quite so perfect as she had feared. 'Happy are those,' exclaimed she, looking at Lucilla, 'the innocence of whose lives recommends them to the divine favour.'

'Innocence,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'can never be pleaded as a ground of acceptance, because the thing does not exist. Innocence excludes the necessity of repentance; and where there is no sin, there can be no need of a Saviour. Whatever therefore we may be in comparison with others, innocence can afford no plea for our acceptance, without annulling the great plan of our redemption.'

'One thing puzzles me,' said Lady Belfield. 'The most worthless people I converse with deny the doctrine of human corruption, a doctrine the truth of which one should suppose their own feelings must confirm; while those few excellent persons who almost seem to have escaped it, insist the most peremptorily on its reality. But if it be really true, surely the mercies of God are so great, that he will overlook the frailties of such weak and erring mortals. So gracious a Saviour will not exact such rigorous obedience from creatures so infirm.'

'Let not what I am going to say, my dear Lady Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'offend you; the correctness of your conduct exempts you from any particular application. But there are too many Christians, who while they speak with reverence of Christ as the Saviour of sinners, do not enough consider him as a deliverer from sin. They regard him rather as having lowered the requisitions of the law, and exonerated his followers from the necessity of that strictness of life which they view as a burthensome part of their religion. From this burthen they flatter themselves it was the chief object of the gospel to deliver them; and from this supposed deliverance it is that they chiefly consider it as a merciful dispensation. A cheap Christianity, of which we can acquit ourselves by a general recognition, and a few stated observances, which require no sacrifices of the will, nor rectification of the life, is, I assure you, the prevailing system; the religion of that numerous class who like to save appearances, and to decline realities; who expect every thing hereafter while they resolve to give up nothing here; but who keep heaven in view as a snug reversion after they shall have squeezed out of this world, to the very last dregs and droppings, all it has to give.'

Lady Belfield, with great modesty, replied, 'Indeed I am ashamed to have said so much upon a topic on which I am unable, and unused to debate. Sir John only smiles, and looks resolved not to help me out. Believe me, however, my dear Sir, that what I have said proceeds not from presumption, but from an earnest desire of being set right. I will only venture to offer one more observation on the afternoon sermon. Dr. Barlow, to my great surprise, spoke of the death of Christ as exhibiting *practical* lessons. Now, though I have always considered it in a general way, as the cause of our salvation, yet its preceptive and moral benefits, I must confess, do not appear to me at all obvious.'

'I conceive,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'our deliverance from the punishment incurred by sin to be one great end and object of the death of our Redeemer; but I am very far from considering this as the only benefit attending it. I conceive it to be most abundant in instruction, and the strongest possible incentive to practical goodness; and that in a great variety of ways. The death of our Redeemer shows us the infinite value of our souls, by showing the inestimable price paid for them, and thus leads us to more diligence in securing their eternal felicity. It is calculated to inspire us with an unfeigned hatred of sin, and more especially to convince us of God's hatred to that, for the pardon of which such a sacrifice was deemed necessary. Now, if it actually produce such an effect, it consequently stimulates us to repentance, and to an increasing dread of violating those engagements which we have so often made to lead a better life. Then the contemplation of this stupendous circumstance will tend to fill our hearts with such a sense of gratitude and obedience, as will be likely to preserve us from relapsing into fresh offences. Again—can any motive operate so powerfully on us towards producing universal charity and forgiveness? Whatever promotes our love to God will dispose us to an increased love for our fellow-creatures. We cannot converse with any man, we cannot receive a kindness from any man, nay, we cannot receive an injury from any man, for whom the Redeemer has not died. The remembrance of the sufferings which procured pardon for the greatest offences, has a natural tendency to lead us to forgive small ones.'

Lady Belfield said, 'I had not indeed imagined there were any practical uses in an event to which I had been, however, accustomed to look with reverence as an atonement for sin.'

'Of these practical effects,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'I will only farther observe, that all human considerations put together, cannot so powerfully inspire us with an indifference to the vanities of life, and the allurements of unhallowed pleasures. No human motive can be so efficacious in sustaining the heart under trials, and reconciling it to afflictions. For what trials and afflictions do not sink into nothing in comparison with the sufferings attending that august event, from which we derive this support? The contemplation of this sacrifice also degrades wealth, debases power, annihilates ambition. We rise from this contemplation with a mind prepared to bear with the infirmities, to relieve the wants, to forgive the unkindness of men. We extract from it a more humbling sense of ourselves, a more subdued spirit, a more sober contempt of whatever the world calls great, than all the lectures of ancient philosophy, or the teachers of modern morals ever inspired.'

During this little debate Sir John maintained

the most invincible silence. His countenance bore not the least mark of ill-humour or impatience, but it was serious and thoughtful; except when his wife got into any little difficulty; he then encouraged her by an affectionate smile, but listened like a man who has not quite made up his mind, yet thinks the subject too important to be dismissed without a fair and candid hearing.

CHAP. XXV.

While we were at breakfast next morning, a sweet little girl flew into the room almost breathless with joy; and running to her mother, presented her with a beautiful nosegay.

'O, I see you were the industrious girl last week, Kate,' said Mrs. Stanley, embracing her, and admiring the flowers. Lady Belfield looked inquisitively. 'It is an invention of Lucilla's,' said the mother, 'that the little one who performs best in the school-room, instead of having any reward which may excite vanity or sensuality, shall be taught to gratify a better feeling, by being allowed to present her mother with a nosegay of the finest flowers, which it is reward enough to see worn at dinner, to which she is always admitted when there is no company; Oh! Pray do not consider us as company; pray let Kate dine with us to-day,' said Lady Belfield. Mrs. Stanley bowed her assent and went on. 'But this is not all.—The flowers they present, they also raise. I went rather too far, when I said that no vanity was excited; they are vain enough of their carnations, and each is eager to produce the largest. In this competition, however, the vanity is not personal. Lucilla has some skill in raising flowers, each girl has a subordinate post under her. Their father often treats them with half a day's work, and then they all treat me with tea and cakes in the honey-suckle arbour of their own planting, which is called Lucilla's bower. It would be hard to say whether parents or children most enjoy these happy holidays.'

At dinner Mrs. Stanley appeared with her nosegay in a large knot of ribbons, which was eyed with no small complacency by little Kate. I observed that Lucilla, who used to manifest much pleasure in the conversation after dinner, was beckoned out of the room by Phœbe, as soon as it was over. I felt uneasy at an absence to which I had not been accustomed; but the cause was explained, when at six o'clock, Kate who was the queen of the day, was sent to invite us to drink tea in Lucilla's bower. We instantly obeyed the summons.

'I knew nothing of this,' said the delighted mother, while we were all admiring the elegant arrangements of this little fete. The purple clematis twisting its flexible branches with those of the pale woodbine, formed a sweet and fragrant canopy to the arched bower, while the flowery tendrils hung down on all sides. Large bunches of roses, intermixed with the silver stars of the jessamine, were stuck into the moss on the inside as a temporary decoration only. The finest plants had been brought from the green-house for the occasion It was a delicious evening, and the little fairy festivity, together with the flitting about of the airy spirits which had prepared it, was absolutely enchanting. Sir John, always poetical, exclaimed in rapture,

> 'Hesperian fables true,'
> If true, here only.'

I needed not this quotation to bring the garden of Eden to my mind, for Lucilla presided. Phœbe was all alive. The other little ones had decorated Kate's flaxen hair with a wreath of woodbines. They sung two or three baby stanzas, which they had composed among themselves, in which Kate was complimented as queen of the fete. The youngest daughter of Lady Aston, who was about Kate's age, and two little girls of Dr. Barlow's were of the children's party on the green. The elder sisters of both families made part of the company within.

When we were all seated in our enchanting bower, and drinking our tea, at which we had no other attendants than the little Hebes themselves, I asked Kate how it happened that she seemed to be distinguished on this occasion from her little sisters. 'Oh Sir,' said she, 'it is because it is my birth-day. I am eight years old to-day. I gave up all my gilt books with pictures this day twelve-month, and to-day I give up all my little story books, I am now going to read such books as men and women read.'

She then ran to her companions, who ranged themselves round a turf seat at a little distance before us, to which were transferred a profusion of cakes and fruit from the bower. While they were devouring them, I turned to Mr. Stanley, and desired an explanation of Kate's speech.

'I make,' said he, 'the renouncing their baby books a kind of epocha, and by thus distinctly marking the period, they never think of returning back to them. We have in our domestic plan several of these artificial divisions of life. These little celebrations are æras, that we use as marking posts, from which we set out on some new course.'

'But as to Kate's books?' said Lady Belfield 'We have,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'too many elementary books. They are read too much and too long. The youthful mind, which was formerly sick from inanition, is now in danger from a plethora.

'Much, however, will depend on capacity and disposition. A child of slower parts may be indulged till nine years old with books which a lively genius will look down upon at seven. A girl of talents *will* read. To *her* no excitement is wanting. The natural appetite is a sufficient incentive. The less brilliant child requires the allurement of lighter books. She wants encouragement as much as the other requires restraint.'

'But don't you think,' said Lady Belfield, that they are of great use in attracting children to love reading?' 'Doubtless they are,' said Mr. Stanley. 'The misfortune is, that the stimulants used to attract at first must be not only continued but heightened, to keep up the attraction. These books are novels in miniature, and the excess of them will lead to the want of novels at full length. The early use of savory dishes is not usually followed by an ap-

petite for plain food. To the taste thus pampered, history becomes dry, grammar laborious, and religion dull.

'My wife, who was left to travel through the wide expanse of universal history, and the dreary deserts of Rapin and Mezerai, is, I will venture to assert, more completely skilled in ancient French, and English history, than any of the girls who have been fed, or rather starved on extracts and abridgements. I mean not to recommend the two last named authors for very young people. They are dry and tedious, and children in our days have opportunities of acquiring the same knowledge with less labour. We have brighter, I wish I could say safer lights. Still fact, and not wit is the leading object of history.

'Mrs. Stanley says, that the very tediousness of her historians had a good effect: they were a ballast to her levity, and a discipline to her mind, of which she has felt the benefit in her subsequent life.

'But to return to the mass of children's books. The too great profusion of them protracts the imbecility of childhood; they arrest the understanding instead of advancing it; they give forwardness without strength; they hinder the mind from making vigorous shoots, teach it to stoop when it should soar, and to contract when it should expand; yet I allow that many of them are delightfully amusing and to a certain degree instructive; but they must not be used as the basis of instruction, but sparingly used at all as refreshment from labour.'

'They inculcate morality and good actions surely,' said Lady Belfield. 'It is true,' replied Mr. Stanley,' 'but they often inculcate them on a worldly principle, and rather teach the pride of virtue, and the profit of virtue, than point out the motive of virtue, and the principle of sin. They reprobate bad actions as evil and injurious to others, but not as an offence against the Almighty. Whereas the Bible comes with a plain, straight-forward, simple, but powerful principle—'How shall I do this great wickedness against *God?*' Against *Thee*, *Thee* only have I sinned, and done this evil in *thy* sight.'

'Even children should be taught that when a man has committed the greatest possible crime against his fellow creature, still the offence against God is what will strike a true penitent with the most deep remorse. All morality which is not drawn from this scriptural source is weak, defective, and hollow. These entertaining authors seldom ground their stories on any intimation that human nature is corrupt; that the young reader is helpless and wants assistance; that he is guilty and wants pardon.'

'Surely, my dear Mr. Stanley,' said Lady Belfield, 'though I do not object to the truth and reasonableness of any thing you have said, I cannot think that these things can possibly be made intelligible to children.'

'The framers of our catechism, Madam, thought otherwise,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'The catechism was written for children, and contains all the seeds and principles of Christianity for men. It evidently requires much explanation, much developement; still it furnishes a wide and important field for colloquial instruction, without which young persons can by no means understand a composition so amiable, but so condensed. The catechism speaks expressly of a 'death unto sin'—of 'a new birth unto righteousness'—of 'being born in sin'—of 'being the children of wrath'—of becoming 'the children of grace'—of 'forsaking sin by repentance'—of 'believing the promise of God by faith.' Now, while children are studying these great truths in the catechism, they are probably, at the same time, almost constantly reading some of those entertaining stories which are grounded and built on a quite opposite principle, and do not even imply the existence of any such fundamental truths.'

'Surely,' interrupted Lady Belfield, 'you would not have these serious doctrines brought forward in story books?'

'By no means, Madam,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'but I will venture to assert that even story books should not be found on a principle directly *contradictory* to them, nay, totally *subversive* of them. The Arabian Nights, and other oriental books of fable, though loose and faulty in many respects, yet have always a reference to the religion of the country. Nothing is introduced against the law of Mahomet: nothing subversive of the opinions of a Mussulman. I do not quarrel with books, for having *no* religion, but for having a *false* religion. A book which in nothing opposes the principle of the Bible, I would be far from calling a bad book, though the Bible was never named in it.'

Lady Belfield observed, 'That she was sorry to say her children found religious studies very dry and tiresome; though she took great pains, and made them learn by heart a multitude of questions and answers, a variety of catechisms and explanations, and the best abridgments of the Bible.'

'My dear Lady Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'you have fully accounted for the dryness and dulness of which you complain. Give them the *Bible itself.* I never yet knew a child who did not delight in the Bible histories, and who would not desire to hear them again and again. From the histories, Mrs. Stanley and I proceed with them to the parables; and from them to the miracles, and a few of the most striking prophecies. When they have acquired a good deal of this desultory knowledge, we begin to weave the parts into a whole. The little girl who had the honour of dining with you to-day, has begun this morning to read the Scriptures with her mother systematically. We shall soon open to her something of the *scheme* of Christianity, and explain how those miracles and prophecies confirm the truth of that religion in which she is to be more fully instructed.

'Upon their historical knowledge, which they acquired by picking out the most interesting stories, we endeavour to ground principles to enlighten their minds, and precepts to influence their conduct. With the genuine language of Scripture I have taken particular care they shall be well acquainted, by digging for the ore in its native bed. While they have been studying the stories, their minds have at the same time been imbued with the impressive phraseology of Scripture. I make a great point

of this, having often seen this useful impression effectually prevented by a multitude of subsidiary histories, and explanations, which too much supersede the use of the original text.

'Only observe,' continued he, 'what divine sentiments, what holy precepts, what devout ejaculations, what strokes of self-abasement, what flights of gratitude, what transports of praise, what touches of penitential sorrow, are found comprised in some one short sentence woven into almost every part of the historical scriptures! observe this, and then confess what a pity it is that children should be commonly set to read the history in a meagre abridgment, stripped of those gems with which the original is so richly inlaid! These histories and expositions become very useful afterwards to young people who are thoroughly conversant with the Bible itself.'

Sir John observed, that he had been struck with the remarkable *disinterestedness* of Mr. Stanley's daughters, and their indifference to things about which most children were so eager. 'Selfishness,' said Mr. Stanley, 'is the hydra we are perpetually combating; but the monster has so much vitality, that new heads spring up as fast as the old ones are cut off. *To counteract selfishness, that inborn, inbred mischief, I hold to be the great art of education.* Education therefore, cannot be adequately carried on, except by those who are deeply convinced of the doctrine of human corruption. This evil principle, as it shows itself early, must be early lopped, or the rapid shoots it makes will, as your favourite Eve observes,

'Soon mock our scant manuring.'

'This counteraction,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'is not like an art or a science, which is to be taken up at set times, and laid aside till the allotted period of instruction returns; but as the evil shows itself at all times, and in all shapes, the *whole force* of instruction is to be bent against it. Mrs. Stanley and I endeavour that not one reward we bestow, not one gratification we afford, shall be calculated to promote it. Gratifications children ought to have. The appetites and inclinations should be reasonably indulged. We are only cautious not to employ them as *the instruments of recompense*, which would look as if we valued them highly, and thought them a fit remuneration for merit. I would rather shew a little indulgence to sensuality *as* sensuality, than make it the reward of goodness, which seems to be the common way. While I indulged the appetite of a child, I would never hold out that indulgence which I granted to the lowest, the animal part of his nature, as a payment for the exertion of his mental or moral faculties.'

'You have one great advantage,' said Sir John, 'and I thank God it is the same in Cavendish-square, that you and Mrs. Stanley draw evenly together. Nothing impedes domestic regulations so effectually as where parents, from difference of sentiment, ill-humour, or bad judgment, obstruct each other's plans, or where one parent makes the other insignificant in the eyes of their children.'

'Mr. Reynolds,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'a friend of mine in this neighbourhood, is in this very predicament. To the mother's weakness the father's temperate discipline seems cruelty. She is perpetually blaming him before the children for setting them to their books. Her attentions are divided between their health, which is perfect, and their pleasure, which is obstructed by her foolish zeal to promote it, far more than by his prudent restrictions. Whatever the father helps them to at table, the mother takes from them lest it should make them sick. What he forbids is always the very thing which is good for them. She is much more afraid, however, of overloading their memories than their stomachs. Reading, she says, will spoil the girls' eyes, stooping to write, will ruin their chests, and working will make them round shouldered. If the boys run, they will have fevers; if they jump, they will sprain their ankles; if they play at cricket, a blow may kill them; if they swim, they will be drowned, the shallowness of the stream is no argument of safety.

'Poor Reynolds's life is one continued struggle between his sense of duty to his children, and his complaisance to his wife. If he carries his point, it is at the expense of his peace; if he relaxes, as he commonly does, his children are the victims. He is at length brought to submit his excellent judgment to her feeble mind, lest his opposition should hurt her health: and he has the mortification of seeing his children trained as if they had nothing but bodies.

'To the wretched education of Mrs. Reynolds herself all this mischief may be attributed; for she is not a bad, though an ignorant woman; and having been harshly treated by her own parents, she fell into the vulgar error of vulgar minds, that of supposing the opposite of wrong must necessarily be right. As she found that being perpetually contradicted had made herself miserable, she concluded that never being contradicted at all would make her children happy. The event has answered as might have been foreseen. Never was a more discontented, disagreeing, troublesome family. The gratification of one want instantly creates a new one. And it is only when they are quite worn out with having done nothing, that they take refuge in their books, as less wearisome than idleness.'

Sir John, turning to Lady Belfield, said in a very tender tone, 'My dear Caroline, this story, in its principal feature, does not apply to us. We concur completely, it is true, but I fear we concur by being both wrong; we both err by excessive indulgence. As to the case in point, while children are young, they may perhaps lean to the parent who spoils them; but I have never yet seen an instance of young persons, where the parents differed, who did not afterwards discover a much stronger affection for the one who had reasonably restrained them, than for the other, whose blind indulgence had at once diminished her importance and their own reverence.'

I observed to Mr. Stanley, that as he had so noble a library, and wished to inspire his children with the love of literature, I was surprised to see their apartment so slenderly provided with books.

'This is the age of excess in every thing,' replied he; 'nothing is a gratification of which

the want has not been previously felt. The wishes of children are all so anticipated, that they never experience the pleasure excited by wanting and waiting. Of their initiatory books they *must* have a pretty copious supply. But as to books of entertainment or instruction of a higher kind, I never allow them to possess one of their own, till they have attentively read and improved by it; this gives them a kind of title to it; and that desire of property so natural to human creatures, I think stimulates them in despatching books which are in themselves a little dry. Expectation with them, as with men, quickens desire, while possession deadens it.'

By this time the children had exhausted all the refreshments set before them, and had retreated to a little farther distance, where, without disturbing us, they freely enjoyed their innocent gambols—playing, singing, laughing, dancing, reciting verses, trying which could puzzle the other in the name of plants, of which they pulled single leaves to increase the difficulty, all succeeded each other. Lady Belfield looking consciously at me, said, 'These are the creatures whom I foolishly suspected of being made miserable by restraint, and gloomy through want of indulgence.'

'After long experience,' said Mr. Stanley, 'I will venture to pronounce, that not all the anxious cutting out of pleasure, not all the costly indulgences which wealth can procure, not all the contrivances of inventive man for his darling youthful offspring, can find out an amusement so pure, so natural, so cheap, so rational, so healthful, I had almost said so religious, as that unbought pleasure connected with a garden.'

Kate and Celia, who had for some time been peeping into the bower in order to catch an interval in the conversation, as soon as they found our attention disengaged, stole in among us; each took the fond father by a hand, and led him to the turf seat. Phœbe presented him a book which he opened, and out of it read with infinite humour, grace and gaiety, *The diverting History of John Gilpin.* This it seems was a pleasure to which they had been led to look forward for some time, but which, in honour of Kate, had been purposely withheld till this memorable day. His little auditors, who grouped themselves round him on the grass, were nearly convulsed with laughter, nor were the tenants of the bower much less delighted.

As we walked into the house, Mr. Stanley said, 'Whenever I read to my children a light and gay composition, which I often do, I generally take care it shall be the work of some valuable author, to whose writings this shall be a pleasant and a tempting prelude. What child of spirit who hears John Gilpin, will not long to be thought old and wise enough to read the 'Task?' The remembrance of the infant rapture will give a predilection for the poet. Desiring to keep their standard high, I accustom them to none but good writers, in every sense of the word; by this means they will be less likely to stoop to ordinary ones when they shall hereafter come to choose for themselves.'

Lady Belfield regretted to me that she had not brought some of her children to the Grove: 'To confess a disgraceful truth,' said she, 'I was afraid they would have been moped to death and to confess another truth still more disgraceful to my authority, my indulgence has been so injudicious, and I have maintained so little control, that I durst not bring some of them for fear of putting the rest out of humour; I am now in a school, where I trust I may learn to acquire firmness, without any diminution of fondness.'

CHAP. XXVI.

The next morning Mr. Stanley proposed that we should pay a visit to some of his neighbours. He and Sir John Belfield rode on horseback, and I had the honour of attending the ladies in the sociable. Lady Belfield, who was now become desirous of improving on her own too relaxed domestic system, by the experience of Mrs. Stanley, told her how much she admired the cheerful obedience of her children. She said, 'she did not so much wonder to see them so good, but she owned she was surprised to see them so happy.'

'I know not,' replied Mrs. Stanley, 'whether the increased insubordination of children is owing to the new school of philosophy and politics, but it seems to me to make part of the system. When I go sometimes to stay with a friend in town to do business, she is always making apologies that she cannot go out with me—'her daughters want the coach.' If I ask leave to see the friends who call on me in such a room, —'her daughters have company there, or they want the room for their music, or it is preparing for the children's ball in the evening.' If a messenger is required—'her daughters want the footman.' There certainly prevails a spirit of independence, a revolutionary spirit, a separation from the parent state. *It is the children's world.*'

'You remind me, Madam,' said I, 'of an old courtier, who being asked by Louis XV. which age he preferred, his own or the present, replied, 'Sire, I passed my youth in respecting old age, and I find I must now pass my old age in respecting children.'

'In some other houses,' said Mrs. Stanley, 'where we visit, besides that of poor Mr. Reynolds, the children seem to have all the accommodations; and I have observed that the convenience and comfort of the father is but a subordinate consideration. The respectful terms of address are nearly banished from the vocabulary of children, and the somewhat too orderly manner which once prevailed is superceded by an incivility, a roughness, a want of attention, which is surely not better than the harmless formality which it has driven out.'

Just as she had said this, we stopt at Mr. Reynolds' gate; neither he nor his lady were at home. Mr. Stanley, who wished to show us a fine reach of the river from the drawing-room window, desired the servant to show us into it. There we beheld a curious illustration of what we had heard. In the ample bow-window lay a confused heap of the glittering spoils of the most expensive toys.—Before the rich silk chairs knelt two of the children, in the act of rapidly

demolishing their fine painted play-things; 'others sat apart on *the floor* retired,' and more deliberately employed in picking to pieces their little gaudy works of art. A pretty girl who had a beautiful wax doll on her lap, almost as big as herself, was pulling out its eyes, that she might see how they were put in. Another, weary of this costly baby, was making a little doll of rags. A turbulent looking boy was tearing out the parchment from a handsome new drum, that he might see, as he told us, where the noise came from. These I forgave, they had meaning in their mischief.

Another, having kicked about a whole little gilt library, was sitting, with the decorated pages torn asunder at his feet, reading a little dirty penny book, which the kitchen maid had bought of a hawker at the door.—The Persian carpet was strewed with the broken limbs of a painted horse, almost as large as a poney, while the discontented little master was riding astride on a long rough stick. A bigger boy, after having broken the pannels of a fine gilt coach, we saw afterwards in the court-yard, nailing together a few dirty bits of ragged elm boards, to make himself a wheel-barrow.

'Not only the disciple of the fastidious Jean Jacques,' exclaimed I, 'but the sound votary of truth and reason, must triumph, at such an instance of the satiety of riches, and the weariness of ignorance and idleness.—One such practical instance of the insufficiency of affluence to *bestow* the pleasures which industry must *buy*;—one such actual exemplification of the folly of supposing that injudicious profusion and mistaken fondness can supply that pleasure which must be worked out before it can be enjoyed, is worth a whole folio of argument or exhortation.'—The ill-bred little flock paid no attention to us, and only returned a rude 'n—o' or 'yes' to our questions.'

'Caroline,' said Sir John; 'these painted ruins afford a good lesson for us. We must desire our rich uncles and our generous god-mothers to make an alteration in their presents, if they cannot be prevailed upon to withhold them.'

'It is a sad mistake,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to suppose that youth wants to be so incessantly amused. They want not pleasures to be chalked out for them. Lay a few cheap and coarse materials in their way, and let their own busy inventions be suffered to work. They have abundant pleasure in the mere freshness and novelty of life, its unbroken health, its elastic spirit, its versatile temper, and its ever new resources.'

'So it appears, Stanley,' said Sir John, 'when I look at your little group of girls, recluses as they are called. How many cheap yet lively pleasures do they seem to enjoy!—their successive occupations, their books, their animating exercise, their charitable rounds, their ardent friendships, the social table at which the elder ones are companions, not mutes; the ever-varying pleasures of their garden,

'Increasing virtue and approving heaven.'

While we were sitting with Lady Aston, on whom we next called, Mr. Stanley suddenly exclaimed, 'The Miss Flams are coming up the gravel walk!' Lady Aston looked vexed, but correcting herself, said Mr. Stanley, we owe this visit to you, or rather to your friend,' bowing to me; 'they saw your carriage stop here, or they would not have done so dull a thing as to have called on me.'

These new guests presented a new scene very uncongenial to the timid and tranquil spirit of the amiable hostess. There seemed to be a contest between the sisters, who should be most eloquent, most loud, or most inqusitive. They eagerly attacked me all at once, as supposing me to be overflowing with intelligence from the metropolis, a place which they not only believed to contain exclusively all that was worth seeing, but all that was worth hearing. The rest of the world they considered as a barren wilderness, of which the hungry inhabitants could only be kept from starving, by such meagre aliment as the occasional reports of its pleasures, fashions, and anecdotes, which might now and then be conveyed by some stray traveller, might furnish.

'It is so strange to us,' said Miss Bell, 'and so monstrously dull and vulgar, to be in the country at this time of the year, that we don't know what to do with ourselves.'

'As to the time of year, Madam,' said I, 'if ever one would wish to be in the country at all, surely this month is the point of perfection. The only immoral thing with which I could ever charge our excellent Sovereign is, that he was born in June, and has thus furnished his fashionable subjects with a loyal pretence for encountering 'the sin and sea-coal of London,' to borrow Will Honeycomb's phrase, in the finest month of the twelve. But where that is the real motive with one, it is the pretence of a thousand.'

'How can you be so shocking? said she; 'but papa is really grown so cross and so stingy, as to prevent our going to town at all these last two or three years; and for so mean a reason that I am ashamed to tell you.' Out of politeness I did not press to know; I needed not, for she was resolved I should 'not burst in ignorance.'

She went on—'Do you know he pretends that times are hard, and public difficulties increasing; and he declares that whatever privations we endure, government must be supported: so that he says, it is right to draw in, in the only way in which he can do it honestly; I am sure it is not doing it creditably. Did you ever hear any thing so shabby?' 'Shabby, Madam,' replied I; 'I honour a gentleman who has integrity enough to do a right thing, and good sense enough not to be ashamed to own it.'

'Yes, but papa need not. The steward declares, if he would only raise his tenants a very little, he would have more than enough; but papa is inflexible. He says my brother must do as he pleases when he comes to the estate, but that he himself promised, when he came into possession, that he would never raise the rents, and that he will never be worse than his word.' As I could not find it in my heart to join in abusing a gentleman for resolving never to be worse than his word, I was silent.

She then inquired, with more seriousness, if there were any prospect of peace. I was better pleased with this question, as it implied more anxiety for the lives of her fellow creatures, than I had given her credit for. 'I am anxiously looking into all the papers,' continued she, without giving me time to speak, 'because as soon as there is peace, papa has promised we shall go to town again. If it was not for that, I should not care if there was war till doomsday, for what with marching regiments, and militia, and volunteers, nothing can be pleasanter than it makes the country, I mean as far as the country *can* be pleasant.' They then ran over the names and respective merits of every opera singer, every dancer, and every actor, with incredible volubility; and I believe they were not a little shocked at my slender acquaintance with the nomenclature, and the little interest I took in the criticisms they built upon it.

Poor Lady Aston looked oppressed and fatigued, but inwardly rejoiced, as she afterwards owned to me, that her daughters were not within hearing. I was of a different opinion, upon the Spartan principle, of making their children sober, by the spectacle of the intoxicated Helots. Miss Bell's eloquence seemed to make but little impression on Sir George; or rather it produced an effect directly contrary to admiration. His good taste seemed to revolt at her flippancy. Every time I see this young man he rises in my esteem. His ingenuous temper and engaging modesty set off to advantage a very fair understanding.

In our way home we were accosted by Mr. Flam. After a rough but hearty salutation, and cordial invitation to come and dine with him, he galloped off, being engaged on business. 'This is an honest country 'squire of the old cut,' said Mr. Stanley afterwards. 'He has a very good estate, which he has so much delight in managing, that he has no pleasure in any thing else. He was prevailed on by his father to marry his present wife for no other reason than because her estate joined to his, and broke in a little on the *arrondissement;* but it was judged that both being united, all might be brought within a ring fence. This was thought a reason sufficiently powerful for the union of two immortal beings, whose happiness here and hereafter might be impeded or promoted by it. The felicity of the connection has been in exact proportion to the purity of the motive.'

I could not forbear interrupting Mr. Stanley, by observing that nothing had surprised or hurt me more in the little observation I had made on the subject of marriage, than the frequent indifference of parents to the moral, and especially to the religious character of the man who proposed himself. 'That family, fortune, and connections should have their full share in the business, I readily admit,' added I; 'but that it should ever form the chief, often the only ground of acceptance, has, I confess, lowered mankind in my esteem more completely, than almost any other instance of ambition, avarice, or worldliness. That a very young girl, who has not been carefully educated, should be captivated by personal advantages, and even infatuated by splendour, is less surprising, than that parents, who having themselves experienced the inefficiency of riches to happiness—that they should be eagerly impatient to part from a beloved daughter, reared with fondness at least, if not with wisdom, to a man of whose principles they have any doubt, and of whose mind they have a mean opinion, is a thing I cannot understand. And yet what proposal almost is rejected on this ground?' Lucilla's eyes at this moment shone with such expressive brightness, that I exultingly said to myself, 'Lord Staunton! I defy thee!'

'The mischief of this lax principle is of wide extent,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'When girls are continually hearing what an advantageous, what a desirable marriage such a young friend has made, with a man so rich, so splendid, so great; though they have been accustomed to hear this very man condemned for his profligacy, perhaps, at least they know him to be destitute of piety—when they hear that these things are not considered as any great objection to the union, what opinion must these girls form, not only of the maxims by which the world is governed, but of the truth of that religion which those persons profess?

'But to return to Mr. Flam. He passed through the usual course of education, but has profited so little by it, that though he has a certain natural shrewdness in his understanding, I believe he has scarcely read a book these twenty years, except Burn's Justice and 'The Agricultural Reports.' Yet when he wants to make a figure he now and then lards his discourse with a scrap of thread-bare Latin which he used to steal in his school boy exercises. He values himself on his integrity, and is not destitute of benevolence. These, he says, are the sum and substance of religion; and though I combat this mistaken notion as often as he puts it in my power, yet I must say that some who make more profession would do well to be as careful in these points. He often contrasts himself with his old friend Ned Tyrrel, and is proud of showing how much better a man he is without religion, than Ned is with all his pretensions to it. It is by thus comparing ourselves with worse men, that we grow vain, and with more fortunate men that we become discontented.

'All the concern he gives himself about his wife and daughters is, that they shall not run him in debt; and indeed he is so liberal, that he does not drive them to the necessity. In every thing else, they follow their own devices. They teazed him, however, to let them spend two or three winters in town, the mother hinting *that it would answer.* He was prevailed on to try it as a speculation, but the experiment failed. He now insists that they shall go no more till the times mend, to any of the advertising places, such as London, Brighton, or Bath: he says, that attending so many fairs and markets is very expensive, especially as the girls don't go off. He will now see what can be done by private contract at home, without the cost of journeys, with fresh keep and trimming, and docking into the bargain. They must now take their chance among country dealers; and provided they will give him a son-in-law, whose estate is free from incumbrances, who pays his

debts, lives within his income, does not rack his tenants, never drinks claret, hates the French, and loves field sports, he will ask no more questions.'

I could not but observe, how perferable the father's conduct, with all its faults, was to that of the rest of the family. 'I had imagined,' said I, 'that this coarse character was quite out of print. Though it is religiously bad, and of course morally defective, yet it is so politically valuable, that I should not be sorry to see a new edition of these obsolete squires, somewhat corrected, and better lettered.'

'All his good qualities,' said Mr. Stanley, 'for want of religion, have a flaw in them. His good nature is so little directed by judgment, that while it serves the individual, it injures the public. As a brother magistrate, I am obliged to act in almost constant opposition to him, and his indiscretions do more mischief, by being of a nature to increase his popularity. He is fully persuaded that occasional intoxication is the best reward for habitual industry; and insists that it is good old English kindness, to make the church ringers periodically tipsy at the holidays, though their families starve for it the whole week. He and I have a regular contest at the annual village fairs, because he insists that my refusing to let them begin on a Sunday is abridging their few rights, and robbing them of a day which they might add to their pleasure, without injury to their profit. He allows all the strolling players, mountebanks, and jugglers to exhibit, because he says, it is a charity. His charity, however, is so short-sighted, that he does not see, that while these vagabonds are supplying the wants of the day, their improvident habits suffer them to look no farther: that his own workmen are spending their hard-earned money in these illegal diversions, while the expense is the least mischief which their daughters incur.'

Our next visit was to Mr. Carlton, whom I had found in one or two previous interviews to be a man of excellent sense, and a perfect gentleman. Sir John renewed with pleasure his acquaintance with the husband, while Lady Belfield was charmed to be introduced to the wife, with whose character she was so enamoured, and whose gentle manners were calculated to confirm the affection which her little history had inspired.

CHAP. XXVII

In the morning Mr. Stanley, Sir John Belfield and I took a walk to call on our valuable rector. On our return home, amidst that sort of desultory conversation which a walk often produces, 'Since we left the parsonage, sir,' said I, addressing myself to Mr. Stanley, 'I have been thinking how little justice has been done to the clerical character in those popular works of imagination which are intended to exhibit a picture of living manners. There are, indeed, a very few happy exceptions. Yet I cannot but regret that so many fair occasions have been lost of advancing the interests of religion by personifying her amiable graces in the character of her ministers. I allude not to the attack of the open infidel, nor the sly insinuation of the concealed sceptic, nor do I advert to the broad assault of the enemy of good government, who falling foul of every established institution, would naturally be expected to show little favour to the ministers of the church. But I advert to those less prejudiced and less hostile writers, who having, as I would hope, no political or moral motive for undermining the order, would rather desire to be considered as among its friends and advocates.'

'I understand you,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'I believe that this is often done, not from any disrespect to the sacred function, not from any wish to depreciate an order which even common sense and common prudence, without the intervention of religion, tells us cannot be set in too respectable a light. I believe it commonly arises from a different cause. The writer himself having but a low idea of the requirements of Christianity, is consequently neither able nor willing to affix a very elevated standard for the character of its ministers. Some of these writers, however, describe a clergyman in general terms, as a paragon of piety, but they seldom make him act up to the description with which he sets out. He is represented, in the gross, as adorned with all the attributes of perfection, but when he comes to be drawn out in detail he is found to exhibit little of that superiority which had been ascribed to him in the lump. You are told how religious he is, but when you come to hear him converse you are not always quite certain whether he professes the religion of the Shaster or the Bible. You hear of his moral excellence, but you find him adopting the maxims of the world, and living in the pursuits of ordinary men. In short, you will find that he has little of a clergyman, except the name.'

'A sensible little work of fiction,' replied I, 'lately fell in my way. Among its characters was that of a grave divine. From the strain of panegyric bestowed on him, I expected to have met with a rival to the fathers of the primitive church. He is presented as a model, and, indeed, he counsels, he reproves, he instructs,—but he goes to a masquerade.'

'This assimilation of general piety,' said Mr. Stanley, 'with occasional conformity to the practice of the gay world, I should fear would produce two ill effects. It will lower the professional standard to the young reader while he is perusing the ideal character, and the comparison will dispose him to accuse of forbidding strictness the pious clergyman of real life After having been entertained with the mixture of religion and laxity in the imaginary divine, whom he has been following from the serious lecture to the scene of revelry, will he not be naturally disposed to accuse of moroseness the existing divine who blends no such contradiction?

'But the evil of which I more particularly complain,' continued he, 'because it exists in works universally read, and written, indeed, with a life and spirit which make them both admired and remembered, is found in the ingenious and popular novels of the witty class In some of these, even where the author intends

to give a favourable representation of a clergyman, he more frequently exhibits him for the purpose of merriment than for that of instruction.'

'I confess with shame,' said Sir John, 'that the spirit, fire, and knowledge of mankind, of the writers to whom you allude, have made me too generally indulgent to their gross pictures of life, and to the loose morals of their good men.'

'*Good men!*' said Mr. Stanley. 'After reading some of those works in the early part of my life, I amused myself with the idea that I should like to interweave the character of a *Christian* among the heroes of Fielding and Smollet as the shortest way of proving their *good men* to be worthless fellows: and to show how little their admired characters rise in point of morals, above the heroes of the Beggar's Opera.

'Knowledge of the world,' continued he, 'should always be used to mend the world. A writer employs his knowledge honestly when he points out the snares and pitfalls of vice. But when he covers those snares and pitfalls with flowers, when he fascinates in order that he may corrupt, when he engages the affections by polluting them, I know not how a man can do a deeper injury to society, or more fatally inflame his own future reckoning.'

'But to return to our more immediate subject,' said I, 'I cannot relish their singling out the person of a pious clergyman as a peculiarly proper vehicle for the display of humour. Why qualities which excite ridicule should be necessarily blended with such as command esteem, is what I never have been able to comprehend.'

'Even where the characters,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'have been so pleasingly delineated as to attract affection by their worth and benevolence, there is always a drawback from their respectability by some trait that is ludicrous, some situation that is unclerical, some incident that is absurd. There is a contrivance to expose them to some awkward distress; there is some palpable weakness to undo the effect of their general example, some impropriety of conduct, some gross error in judgment, some excess of simplicity, which, by infallibly diminishing the dignity, weakens the influence of the character, and of course lessens the veneration of the reader.'

'I have often,' replied I, 'felt, that though we may love the man we laugh at, we shall never reverence him. We may like him as a companion, but we shall never look up to him as an instructor.'

'I know no reason,' observed Mr. Stanley, 'why a pious divine may not have as much wit and humour as any other man. And we have it on the word of the wittiest of the whole body, Dr. South, that 'piety does not necessarily involve dulness.' An author may lawfully make his churchman as witty as he pleases, or rather as witty as he can: but he should never make him the butt of the wit of other men, which is, in fact, making him the butt of his own wit. What is meant to be a *comical parson* is no respectable or prudent exhibition; nor with the utmost stretch of candour, can I believe that the motive of the exhibitor is always of the purest kind.

'How far,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'authors have found it necessary to add these diverting appendages in order to qualify piety, how far they have been obliged to dilute religion, so as to make it palatable and pardonable, I will not pretend to decide. But whether such a mixture be not calculated to leave a lasting effect on the mind, unfavourable to the clerical character whether these associations are not injurious even to religion itself, let those declare, if they will speak honestly who have been accustomed to be excessively delighted with such combinations.'

'I am a little afraid,' returned Sir John, 'that I have formerly in some degree fallen under this censure. But surely, Stanley, you would not think it right to lavish *undue* praise, even on characters of a better stamp; you would not commend ordinary merit highly, and above all you would not, I presume screen the faults of the worthless?'

'I am as far from insisting,' replied he, 'on the universal piety of the clergy, as for bespeaking reverence for the unworthy individual: all that I contend for is, that no arts should ever be employed to discredit the *order*. The abettors of revolutionary principles, a few years ago, had the acuteness to perceive, that so to discredit it was one of the most powerful engines. Had not that spirit been providently extinguished, they would have done more mischief to religion by their artful mode of introducing degrading pictures of our national instructors, in their popular tracts, than the Hobbes and the Bolingbrokes had done by blending irreligion with their philosophy, or the Voltaires and the Gibbons by interweaving it into their history. Whatever is mixed up with our amusements is swallowed with more danger, because with more pleasure, and less suspicion than any thing which comes under a graver name, and more serious shape.'

'I presume,' said Sir John, 'you do not mean to involve in your censure the exquisitely keen satires of Erasmus on the ecclesiastics of his day: and I remember that you yourself could never read without delight, the pointed wit of Boileau against the spiritual voluptuaries of his time, in his admirable *Lutrin*. Perhaps you are not disposed to give the same quarter to the pleasant ridicule of Le Sage?'

'We justify ourselves as good protestants,' rejoined Mr. Stanley, 'for pardoning the severe but just attacks of the reformer and the poet on the vices of a corrupt church.—Though, to speak the truth, I am not quite certain that even these two discriminating and virtuous authors did not, especially Erasmus, now and then indulge themselves in a sharpness which seemed to bear upon religion itself, and not merely on the luxury and idleness of its degenerate ministers.—As to Le Sage, who, with all his wit, I should never have thought of bringing into such good company, he was certainly withheld by no restraints either moral or religious. And it is obvious to me that he seems rather gratified, that he had the faults to expose, than actuated by an honest zeal, by exposing to correct them.'

'I wish I could say,' replied Sir John, 'that the Spanish Friar of Dryden, and the witty Opera of the living Dryden did not fall under the same suspicion. I have often observed, that as Lucien dashes with equal wit and equal viru

lence at every religion, of every name and every nation, so Dryden with the same diffusive zeal attacks the ministers of every religion. In ransacking muftis, monks, and prelates to confirm his favourite position,

That Priests of all religions are the same,

he betrays a secret wish to intimate that not only the priests of all religions, but the religions of all priests are pretty much alike.'

'He has, however,' said Mr. Stanley, 'made a sort of palinode, by his consummately beautiful poem of the *good parson*.—Yet even this lovely picture he could not allow himself to complete without a fling at the order, which he declares at the conclusion, he only spares for the sake of one exception.'

'Rousseau,' said Sir John, 'seems to be the only sceptic who has not in this respect acted unfairly. His Savoyard vicar is represented as a grave, consistent, and exemplary character.'

'True,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'but don't you perceive why he is so represented? He is exhibited as a model of goodness, in order to exalt the scanty faith and unsound doctrines of which he is the teacher.'

'I would not,' continued he, 'call that man an enemy to the church who should reprobate characters who are a dishonour to it.—But the just though indignant biographer of a real Sterne, or a real Churchill, exhibits a very different spirit, and produces a very different effect from the painter of an imaginary *Thwackum* or *Supple*. In the historian, concealment would be blameable, and palliation mischievous. He fairly exposes the individual without wishing to bring any reproach on the profession. What I blame is, employing the vehicle of fiction for the purpose of blackening, or in any degree discrediting, a body of men, who depend much for the success of their labours on public opinion, and on the success of whose labours depends so large a portion of the public virtue.'

'I have sometimes,' said I, 'heard my father express his surprise that the most engaging of all writers, Mr. Addison, a man so devout himself, so forward to do honour to religion on all occasions, should have let slip so fair an opportunity for exalting the value of a country clergyman as the description of Sir Roger de Coverly's chaplain naturally put in his hands.'*

'You must allow,' said Sir John, 'that he has made him worthy, and that he has not made him absurd.'

'I grant it,' replied I, 'but he has made him dull and acquiescent. He has made him any thing rather than a pattern.'

'But what I most regret,' said Mr. Stanley, is, that the use he has made of this character is to give the stamp of his own high authority to a practice, which though it is characteristically recommended by the whimsical knight, whose original vein of humour leaves every other far behind it, yet should never have had the sanction of the author of the Saturday pieces in the Spectator—I mean, the practice of the minister of a little country parish, preaching to farmers and peasants the most learned, logical, and profound discourses in the English language.'

'It has, I believe,' replied Sir John, 'excited general wonder that so consummate a judge of propriety should have commended, as suitable instruction for illiterate villagers, the sermons of those incomparable scholars Fleetwood, South, Tillotson, Barrow, Calamy, and Sanderson.'

'But this is not the worst,' said Mr. Stanley, 'for Mr. Addison not only clearly approves it in the individual instance, but takes occasion from it, to establish a general rule, and indefinitely to advise the country clergy to adopt the custom of preaching these same discourses, '*instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own.*'

'Surely,' replied I, 'an enemy of religion could not easily have devised a more effectual method for thinning the village church, or lessening the edification of the unlettered auditor, than this eminent advocate for Christianity has here incautiously suggested.'

'I am sorry,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that such a man has given such a sanction for reducing religious instruction to little more than a form, and for seeming to consider the mere act of attending public worship as the sole end of its institution, without sufficiently taking into the account the nature and the importance of the instruction itself; and without considering that nothing can be edifying which is not intelligible. Besides, it is not only preventing the improvement of the people, but checking that of the preacher. It not only puts a bar to his own advancement in the art of teaching, but retards that growth in piety which might have been promoted in himself while he was preparing in secret to promote that of his hearers.'

'And yet,' replied Sir John, 'to speak honestly, I am afraid, had I been the patron, I should have been so gratified myself with hearing those fine compositions, that I could not heartily have blamed my chaplain for preaching no other.'

'My dear Sir John,' said Mr. Stanley, 'neither your good sense, nor your good nature would, I am persuaded, allow you to purchase your own gratification at the expense of a whole congregation. You, a man of learning and of leisure, can easily supply any deficiency of ability in plain but useful sermons. But how would the tenants, the workmen, and the servants, (for of such at least was Sir Roger's congregation composed,) how would those who have little other means of edification indemnify themselves for the loss of that single opportunity which the whole week affords them? Is not that a most inequitable way of proportioning instruction which, while it pleases or profits the well-informed individual, cuts off the instruction of the multitude? If we may twist a text from its natural import, is it 'rightly dividing the word of truth' to feast the patron and starve the parish?'

* See Spectator, Vol ii. No. 107

CHAP. XXVIII.

Though Mr. Stanley had checked my impetuosity in my application to him, and did not

encourage my addresses with a promptitude suited to the ardour of my affection, yet as the warmth of my attachment, notwithstanding I made it a duty to restrain its outward expression, could not escape either his penetration, or that of his admirable wife, they began a little to relax in the strictness with which they had avoided speaking of their daughter. They never indeed introduced the subject themselves, yet it some how or other never failed to find its way into all conversation in which I was one of the interlocutors.

Sitting one day in Lucilla's bower with Mrs. Stanley, and speaking, though in general terms, on the subject nearest my heart, with a tenderness and admiration as sincere as it was fervent, I dwelt particularly on some instances which I had recently heard from Edwards, of her tender attention to the sick poor, and her zeal in often visiting them without regard to weather, or the accommodation of a carriage.

'I assure you,' said Mrs. Stanley, 'you overrate her. Lucilla is no prodigy dropped down from the clouds. Ten thousand other young women, with natural good sense, and good temper, might, with the same education, the same neglect of what is useless, and the same attention to what is necessary, acquire the same habits and the same principles. Her being no prodigy, however, perhaps makes her example, as far as it goes, more important. She may be more useful, because she carries not that discouraging superiority, which others might be deterred from imitating, through hopelessness to reach. If she is not a miracle whom others might despair to emulate, she is a Christian whom every girl of a fair understanding and good disposition may equal, and whom, I hope and believe, many girls excel.'

I asked Mrs. Stanley's permission to attend the young ladies in one of their benevolent rounds. 'When I have leisure to be of the party,' replied she, smiling, 'you shall accompany us. I am afraid to trust your warm feelings. Your good nature would perhaps lead you to commend as a merit, what in fact deserves no praise at all, the duty being so obvious, and so indispensable. I have often heard it regretted that ladies have no stated employment, no profession. It is a mistake. *Charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession.* Men have little time or taste for details. Women of fortune have abundant leisure, which can in no way be so properly or so pleasantly filled up, as in making themselves intimately acquainted with the worth and the wants of all within their reach. With their wants, because it is their bounden duty to administer to them; with their worth, because without this knowledge, they cannot administer prudently and appropriately.'

I expressed to Mrs. Stanley the delight with which I had heard of the admirable regulations of her family, in the management of the poor, and how much their power of doing good was said to be enlarged by the judgment and discrimination with which it was done.

'We are far from thinking,' replied she, 'that our charity should be limited to our own immediate neighbourhood. We are of opinion, that it should not be left undone any where, but that *there* it should be done indispensably. We consider our own parish as our more appropriate field of action, where Providence, by 'fixing the bounds of our habitation,' seems to have made us peculiarly responsible for the comfort of those whom he has doubtless placed around us for that purpose. It is thus that the Almighty vindicates his justice, or rather calls on us to vindicate it. It is thus he explains why he admits natural evil into the world, by making the wants of one part of the community an exercise for the compassion of the other.

'Surely,' added Mrs. Stanley, 'the reason is particularly obvious, why the bounty of the affluent ought to be most liberally, though not exclusively, extended to the spot whence they derived their revenues. There seems indeed to be a double motive for it. The same act involves a duty both to God and to man. The largest bounty to the necessitous on our estates, is rather justice than charity. 'Tis but a kind of pepper-corn acknowledgment to the great Lord and proprietor of all, from whom we hold them. And to assist their own labouring poor is a kind of natural debt, which persons who possess great landed property owe to those from the sweat of whose brow they derive their comforts, and even their riches. 'Tis a commutation, in which, as the advantage is greatly on our side, so is our duty to diminish the difference, of paramount obligation.'

I then repeated my request, that I might be allowed to take a practical lesson in the next periodical visit to the cottages.

Mrs. Stanley replied, 'As to my girls, the elder ones, I trust, are such veterans in their trade that your approbation can do them no harm, nor do they stand in need of it as an incentive. But should the little ones find that their charity procures them praise, they might perhaps be charitable for the sake of praise, their benevolence might be set at work by their vanity, and they might be led to do that, from the love of applause, which can only please God when the principle is pure. *The iniquity of our holy things*, my good friend, requires much Christian vigilance. Next to not giving at all the greatest fault is to give from ostentation. The contest is only between two sins. The motive robs the act of the very name of virtue, while the good work that is paid in praise, is stripped of the hope of higher retribution.'

On my assuring Mrs. Stanley, that I thought such an introduction to their systematic schemes of charity might inform my own mind and improve my habits, she consented, and I have since been a frequent witness of their admirable method; and have been studying plans which involve the good both of body and soul. Oh! if I am ever blest with a coadjutress, a directress, let me rather say, formed under such auspices, with what delight shall I transplant the principles and practices of Stanley Grove to the Priory! Nor indeed would I ever marry but with the animating hope that not only myself, but all around me, would be the better and the happier for the presiding genius I shall place there.

Sir John Belfield had joined us while we were on this topic. I had observed sometimes that though he was earnest on the general principle

of benevolence, which he considered as a most imperious duty, or, as he said in his warm way, as so lively a pleasure, that he was almost ready to suspect if it *were* a duty; yet I was sorry to find that his generous mind had not viewed this large subject under all its aspects. He had not hitherto regarded it as a matter demanding any thing but money; while time, inquiry, discrimination, system, he confessed he had not much taken into the account. He did a great deal of good, but had not allowed himself time or thought for the best way of doing it. Charity, as opposed to hard-heartedness and covotousness, he warmly exercised; but when, with a willing liberality, he had cleared himself from the suspicion of those detestable vices, he was indolent in the proper distribution of money and somewhat negligent of its just application. Nor had he ever considered, as every man should do, because every man's means are limited, how the greatest quantity of good could be done with any given sum.

But the worst of all was, he had imbibed certain popular prejudices respecting the more *religious* charities; prejudices altogether unworthy of his enlightened mind. He too much limited his ideas of bounty to bodily wants. This distinction was not with him, as it is with many, invented as an argument for saving his money, which he mostwillingly bestowed for feeding and clothing the necessitous. But as to the propriety of affording them religious instruction, he owned he had not made up his mind. He had some doubts whether it were a duty. Whether it were a benefit, he had still stronger doubts; adding, that he should begin to consider the subject more attentively than he had yet done.

Mrs. Stanley in reply, said, 'I am but a poor casuist, Sir John, and I must refer you to Mr. Stanley for abler arguments than I can use. I will venture however to say, that even on your own ground it appears to be a pressing duty. If sin be the cause of so large a portion of the miseries of human life, must not that be the noblest charity which cures, or lessens, or prevents sin? And are not they the truest benefactors even to the bodies of men, who by their religious exertions to prevent the corruption of vice, prevent also, in some measure, that poverty and disease which are the natural concomitants of vice? If in endeavouring to make men better, by the infusion of a religious principle which shall check idleness, drinking, and extravagance, we put them in the way to become healthier, and richer, and happier, it will furnish a practical argument which I am sure will satisfy your benevolent heart.'

CHAP. XXIX.

Mr. Tyrrel and his nephew called on us in the evening, and interrupted a pleasant and useful conversation, on which we were just entering.

'Do you know, Stanley,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'that you have absolutely corrupted my nephew, by what passed at your house the other day in favour of reading. He has ever since been ransacking the shelves for idle books'

'I should be seriously concerned,' replied Mr Stanley, 'if any thing I had said should have drawn Mr. Edward off from more valuable studies, or diverted him from the important pursuit of religious knowledge.'

'Why to do him justice, and you too,' resumed Mr. Tyrrel, 'he has since that conversation begun assiduously to devote his mornings to serious reading, and it is only an hour's leisure in the evening which he used to trifle away, that he gives to books of taste; but I had rather he would let them all alone. The best of them will only fill his heart with cold morality, and stuff his head with romance and fiction. I would not have a religious man ever look into a book of your *belles lettres* nonsense; and if he be really religious, he will make a general bonfire of the poets.'

'That is rather two sweeping a sentence,' said Mr. Stanley. 'It would, I grant you, have been a benefit to mankind, if the entire works of some celebrated poets, and a considerable portion of the works of many not quite so exceptionable, were to assist the conflagration of your pile.'

'And if fuel failed,' said Sir John Belfield, 'we might not only rob Belinda's altar of her

> Twelve tomes of French romances neatly gilt,

but feed the flame with countless marble covered octavos from the modern school.—But having made this concession, allow me to observe, that because there has been a voluptuous Petronius, a profane Lucretius, and a licentious Ovid, to say nothing of the numberless modern poets, or rather individual poems, that are immoral and corrupt—shall we therefore exclude all works of imagination from the library of a young man? Surely we should not indiscriminately banish the Muses, as infallible corruptors of the youthful mind; I would rather consider a blameless poet as the auxiliary of virtue.—Whatever talent enables a writer to possess an empire over the heart, and to lead the passions at his command puts it in his power to be of no small service to mankind. It is no new remark that the abuse of any good thing is no argument against its legitimate use. Intoxication affords no just reason against the use of wine, nor prodigality against the possession of wealth. In the instance in dispute I should rather infer that a talent capable of diffusing so much mischief, was susceptible of no small benefit. That it has been so often abused by its misapplication, is one of the highest instances of the ingratitude of man for one of the highest gifts of God.'

'I cannot think,' said I, 'that the Almighty conferred such a faculty with a wish to have it extinguished. Works of imagination have in many countries been a chief instrument of civilization. Poetry has not only preceded science in the history of human progress, but it has in many countries preceded the knowledge of the mechanical arts; and I have somewhere read, that in Scotland they could write elegant Latin verse before they could make a wheel-barrow. For my own part, in my late visit to London, I thought the decline of poetry no favourable symptom.'

'I rejoice to hear it is declining,' said Tyrrel. I hope that what is decaying, may in time be extinguished.'

'Mr. Tyrrel would have been delighted with what I was displeased,' replied I. 'I met with philosophers, who were like Plato in nothing but in his abhorrence of the Muses; with politicians, who resembled Burleigh only in his enmity to Spenser; and with warriors, who however they might emulate Alexander in his conquests, would never have imitated him in sparing 'the house of Pindarus.'

'The *art* of poetry,' said Mr. Stanley, 'is to touch the passions, and its *duty* to lead them on the side of virtue. To raise and to purify the amusements of mankind; to multiply and to exalt pleasures, which being purely intellectual, may help to exclude such as are gross, in beings so addicted to sensuality, is surely not only to give pleasure, but to render service. It is allowable to seize every avenue to the heart of a being so prone to evil; to rescue him by every fair means not only from the degradation of vice, but from the dominion of idleness. I do not now speak of gentlemen of the sacred function, to which Mr. Edward Tyrrel aspires, but of those who, having no profession, have no stated employment; and who, having more leisure, will be in danger of exceeding the due bounds in the article of amusement. Let us then endeavour to allure our youth of fashion from the low pleasures of the dissolute; to snatch them, not only from the destruction of the gaming-table, but from the excesses of the dining-table, by inviting them to an elegant delight that is safe, and especially by enlarging the range of pure mental pleasure.

'In order to this, let us do all we can to cultivate their taste, and innocently indulge their fancy. Let us contend with impure writers, those deadliest enemies to the youthful mind, by opposing to them in the chaster author, images more attractive, wit more acute, learning more various; in all which excellencies our first-rate poets certainly excel their vicious competitors.'

'Would you, Mr. Tyrrel,' said Sir John, 'throw into the enemy's camp all the light arms which often successfully annoy where the heavy artillery cannot reach?'

'Let us,' replied Mr. Stanley, rescue from the hands of the profane and the impure, the monopoly of wit which they affect to possess, and which they would possess, if no good men had written works of elegant literature, and if all good men totally despised them.'

'For my own part,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'I believe that a good man, in my sense of the word, will neither write works of imagination, nor read them.'

'At your age and mine, and better employed as we certainly may be,' said Mr. Stanley, 'we want no such resources. I myself, though I strongly retain the relish, have little leisure for the indulgence, which yet I would allow, though with great discrimination, to the young and the unoccupied. What is to whet the genius of the champions of virtue, so as to enable them successfully to combat the leaders of vice and infidelity, if we refuse to let them be occasionally sharpened and polished by such studies? That model of brilliant composition, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, was of this opinion, when he said 'by whatever instrument piety is advantaged, use that, though thou grindest thy spears and arrows at the forges of the Philistines.'

'I know,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'that a Christian need not borrow weapons of attack or defence from the classic armoury; but, to drop all metaphor, if he is called upon to defend truth and virtue against men whose minds are adorned with all that is elegant, strengthened with all that is powerful, and enriched with all that is persuasive, from the writers in question—Is he likely to engage with due advantage if his own mind be destitute of the embellishments with which their's abound? While wit and imagination are *their* favourite instruments, shall we consider the aid of either as useless, much less as sinful in their opponents?'

'While young men *will* be amused,' said Sir John, 'it is surely of importance that they should be *safely* amused. We should not therefore wish to obliterate in authors such faculties as wit and fancy, nor to extinguish a taste for them in readers.'

'Show me any one instance of good that ever was effected by any one poet,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'and I will give up the point; while on the other hand, a thousand instances of mischief might doubtless be produced.'

'The latter part of your assertion, Sir,' said I, 'I fear is too true: but to what evil has elevation of fancy led Milton, or Milton his readers? In what labyrinths of guilt did it involve Spenser or Cowley? Has Thomson, or has Young added to the crimes or the calamities of mankind? Into what immoralities did it plunge Gay or Goldsmith? Has it tainted the purity of Beattie in his Minstrel, or that of the living minstrel of the Lay? What reader has Mason corrupted, or what reader has Cowper not benefitted? Milton was an enthusiast both in religion and politics. Many enthusiasts with whom he was connected, doubtless condemned the exercise of his imagination in his immortal poem as a crime; but his genius was too mighty to be restrained by opposition, and his imagination too vast and powerful to be kept down by a party. Had he confined himself in his prose writings, weighty and elaborate as some of them are, how little service would he have done the world, and how little would he now be read or quoted! In his life time politics might blind his enemies, and fanaticism his friends. But now, who, comparatively, reads the Iconoclastes? Who does not read Comus?'

'What then,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'you would have our young men spend their time in reading idle verses, and our girls, I suppose, in reading loose romances?'

'It is to preserve both from evils which I deprecate,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that I would consign the most engaging subjects to the best hands, and raise the taste of our youth, by allowing a little of their leisure, and of their leisure only, to such amusements; and that chiefly with a view to disengage them from worse pursuits. It is not romance, but indolence; it is not poetry, but sensuality, which are the p

vailing evils of the day—evils far more fatal in themselves, far more durable in their effects, than the perusal of works of wit and genius. Imagination will cool of itself. The effervescence of fancy will soon subside; but absorbing dissipation, but paralyzing idlcnes, but degrading self-love,

Grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength.

'A judicious reformer,' said Sir John, 'will accommodate his remedy to an existing and not an imaginary evil. When the old romances, the grand Cyruses, the Clelias, the Cassandras, the Pharamonds, and the Amadises, had turned all the young heads in Europe; or when the fury of knight errantry demanded the powerful reign of Cervantes to check it—it was a duty to attempt to lower the public delirium. When, in our own age and country, Sterne wrote his corrupt but too popular lesser work, he became the mischievous founder of the school of sentiment. A hundred writers communicated, a hundred thousand readers caught the infection. Sentimentality was the disease which then required to be expelled. The reign of Sterne is past. Sensibility is discarded, and with it the softness which it must be confessed belonged to it. Romance is vanished, and with it the heroic, though somewhat unnatural elevation which accompanied it. We have little to regret in the loss of either: nor have we much cause to rejoice in what we have gained by the exchange. A pervading and substantial selfishness, the striking characteristic of our day, is no great improvement on the wildness of the old romance, or the vapid puling of the sentimental school.'

'Surely,' said I, (L'Almanac des Gourmands at that instant darting across my mind,) 'it is as honourable for a gentleman to excel in critical as in culinary skill. It is as noble to cultivate the intellectual taste, as that of the palate. It is at least as creditable to discuss the comparative merits of Sophocles and Shakspeare, as the rival ingredients of a soup or a sauce. I will even venture to affirm that it is as dignified an amusement to run a tilt in favour of Virgil or Tasso against their assailants, as to run a barouche against a score of rival barouches; and though I own that, in Gulliver's land of the Houyhnhnms, the keeping up the breed of horses might have been the nobler patriotism, yet in Great Britain it is hitherto at least become no contemptible exertion of skill and industry to keep up the breed of gentlemen.'

CHAP. XXX.

I STROLLED out alone, intending to call at the Rectory, but was prevented by meeting the worthy Doctor Barlow, who was coming to the Grove. I could not lose so fair an opportunity of introducing a subject that was seldom absent from my thoughts. I found it was a subject, on which I had no new discoveries to impart. He told me, he had seen and rejoiced in the election my heart had made. I was surprised at his penetration. He smiled, and told me, 'he took no great credit for his sagacity, in perceiving what was obvious to spectators far more indifferent than himself. That I resembled those animals who by hiding their heads in the earth fancied nobody could see them.'

I asked him a thousand questions about Lucilla, whose fine mind I knew he had in some measure contributed to form. I inquired with an eagerness which he called jealousy, who were her admirers? 'As many men as have seen her,' replied he, 'I know of no man who has so many rivals as yourself. To relieve your apprehensions, however, I will tell you, that though there have been several competitors for her favour, not one has been accepted. There has, indeed, been this summer a very formidable candidate, young Lord Staunton, who has a large estate in the country, and whom she met on a visit.' At these words I felt my fears revive. A young and handsome peer seemed so redoubtable a rival, that for a moment I only remembered she was a woman, and forgot that she was Lucilla.

'You may set your heart at rest,' said Dr. Barlow, who saw my emotion. 'She heard he had seduced the innocent daughter of one of his tenants, under the most specious pretence of honourable love. This, together with the looseness of his religious principles, led her to give his lordship a positive refusal, though he is neither destitute of talents, nor personal accomplishments.'

How ashamed was I of my jealousy! How I felt my admiration increase! Yet I thought it was too great before to admit of augmentation. 'Another proposal,' said Dr. Barlow, 'was made to her father by a man every way unexceptionable. But she desired him to be informed that it was her earnest request, that he would proceed no further, but spare her the pain of refusing a gentleman, for whose character she entertained a sincere respect; but being persuaded she could never be able to feel more than respect, she positively declined receiving his addresses, assuring him at the same time, that she sincerely desired to retain as a friend, him whom she felt herself obliged to refuse as a husband. She is as far from the vanity of seeking to make conquests, as from the ungenerous insolence of using ill, those whom her merit has captivated, and whom her judgment cannot accept.'

After admiring in the warmest terms the purity and generosity of her heart, I pressed Dr. Barlow still farther, as to the interior of her mind. I questioned him as to her early habits, and particularly as to her religious attainments, telling him that nothing was indifferent to me which related to Lucilla.

'Miss Stanley,' replied he, 'is governed by a simple, practical end, in all her religious pursuits. She reads her bible, not from habit, that she may acquit herself of a customary form; nor to exercise her ingenuity by allegorizing literal passages, or spiritualizing plain ones, but that she may improve in knowledge, and grow in grace. She accustoms herself to meditation, in order to get her mind more deeply imbued with a sense of eternal things. She practices self-examination, that she may learn to watch against the first rising of bad dispositions, and to detect

every latent evil in her heart. She lives in the regular habit of prayer; not only that she may implore pardon for sin, but that she may obtain strength against it. She told me one day when she was ill, that if she did not constantly examine the actual state of her mind, she should pray at random, without any certainty what particular sins she should pray against, or what were her particular wants. She has read much scripture and little controversy. There are some doctrines that she does not pretend to define, which she yet practically adopts. She cannot perhaps give you a disquisition on the mysteries of the Holy Spirit, but she can and does fervently implore his guidance and instruction; she believes in his efficacy, and depends on his support. She is sensible that those truths, which from their deep importance are most obvious, have more of the vitality of religion, and influence practice more, than those abstruse points, which unhappily split the religious world into so many parties.

'If I were to name what are her predominant virtues, I should say sincerity and humility. Conscious of her own imperfections, she never justifies her faults, and seldom extenuates them. She receives reproof with meekness, and advice with gratitude. Her own conscience is always so ready to condemn her, that she never wonders, nor takes offence at the censure of others.

'That softness of manner which you admire in her, is not the varnish of good breeding, nor is it merely the effect of good temper, though in both she excels, but it is the result of humility. She appears humble, not because a mild exterior is graceful, but because she has an inward conviction of unworthiness which prevents an assuming manner. Yet her humility has no cant; she never disburthens her conscience by a few disparaging phrases, nor lays a trap for praise by indiscriminately condemning herself. Her humility never impairs her cheerfulness; for the sense of her wants directs her to seek, and her faith enables her to find, the sure foundation of a better hope than any which can be derived from a delusive confidence in her own goodness.

'One day,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'when I blamed her gently for her backwardness in expressing her opinion on some serious point, she said, 'I always feel diffident in speaking on these subjects, not only lest I should be *thought* to assume, but lest I really *should* assume a degree of piety which may not belong to me. My great advantages make me jealous of myself. My dear father so carefully instructed me, and I live so much in the habit of hearing his pious sentiments, that I am often afraid of appearing better than I am, and of pretending to feel in my heart, what perhaps I only approve in my judgment. When my beloved mother was ill,' continued she, 'I often caught myself saying mechanically, 'God's will be done!' when I blushed to own, how little I felt in my heart of that resignation of which my lips were so lavish.'

I hung with inexpressible delight on every word Dr. Barlow uttered, and expressed my fears that such a prize was too much above my deserts, to allow me to encourage very sanguine hopes. 'You have my cordial wishes for your success,' said he, 'though I shall lament the day when you snatch so fair a flower from our fields, to transplant it into your northern gardens.'

We had now reached the Park-gate, where Sir John and Lady Belfield joined us. As it was very hot, Dr. Barlow proposed to conduct us a nearer way. He carried us through a small nursery of fruit trees, which I had not before observed, though it was adjoining the ladies' flower garden, from which it was separated and concealed by a row of small trees. I expressed my surprise that the delicate Lucilla would allow so coarse an enclosure to be so near her ornamented ground. 'You see she does all she can to shut it out,' replied he. 'I will tell you how it happens, for I cannot vindicate the taste of my fair friend, without exposing a better quality in her. But if I betray her you must not betray me.

'It is a rule when any servant who has lived seven years at the Grove marries, provided they have conducted themselves well, and made a prudent choice, for Mr. Stanley to give them a piece of ground on the waste to build a cottage; he also allows them to take stones from his quarry, and lime from his kiln; to this he adds a bit of ground for a garden. Mrs. Stanley presents some kitchen furniture, and gives a wedding dinner; and the Rector refuses his fee for performing the ceremony.'

'Caroline,' said Sir John, 'this is not the first time since we have been at the Grove, that I have been struck with observing how many benefits naturally result to the poor, from the rich living on their own estates. Their dependants have a thousand petty local advantages, which cost almost nothing to the giver, which are yet valuable to the receiver, and of which the absent never think.'

'You have heard,' said Dr. Barlow, 'that Miss Stanley, from her childhood, has been passionately fond of cultivating a garden. When she was hardly fourteen, she began to reflect that the delight she took in this employment was attended neither with pleasure nor profit to any one but herself, and she became jealous of a gratification which was so entirely selfish. She begged this piece of waste ground of her father, and stocked it with a number of fine young fruit trees of the common sort, apples, pears, plums, and the smaller fruits. When there is a wedding among the older servants, or when any good girl out of her school marries, she presents their little empty garden with a dozen young apple trees, and a few trees of the other sorts, never forgetting to embellish their little court with roses and honey-suckles. These last she transplants from the shrubbery, not to fill up the *village garden*, as it is called, with any thing that is of no positive use. She employs a poor lame man in the village a day in the week to look after this nursery, and by cuttings and grafts a good stock is raised on a small space. It is done at her own expense, Mr. Stanley making this a condition when he gave her the ground; 'otherwise,' said he, 'trifling as it is, it would be my charity and not her's, and she would get thanked for a kindness which would cost her nothing.' The warm-hearted little Phœbe co-operates in this, and all her sister's labours of love.'

'Some such union of charity with every personal indulgence, she generally imposes on herself and from this association she has acquired another virtue, for she tells me smiling, she is sometimes obliged to content herself with practising frugality instead of charity. When she finds she cannot afford both her own gratification, and the charitable act which she wanted to associate with it, and is therefore compelled to give up the charity, she compels herself to give up the indulgence also. By this self-denial she gets a little money in hand, for the next demand, and thus is enabled to afford both next time.'

As he finished speaking, we spied the lame gardener pruning and clearing the trees. 'Well, James,' said the Doctor, 'how does your nursery thrive?' 'Why, Sir,' said the poor man, 'we are rather thin of stout trees at present. You know we had three weddings at Christmas, which took thirty-six of my best apple trees at a blow, besides half a dozen tall pear trees, and as many plums. But we shall soon fetch it up, for Miss Lucilla makes me plant two for every one that is removed, so that we are always provided for a wedding, come when it will.'

I now recollected that I had been pleased with observing so many young orchards and flourishing cottage gardens in the village; little did I suspect the fair hand which could thus in a very few years diffuse an air of smiling comfort around these humble habitations, and embellish poverty itself. She makes, they told me, her periodical visits of inspection to see that neatness and order do not degenerate.

Not to appear too eager, I asked the poor man some questions about his health, which seemed infirm. 'I am but weak, Sir,' said he, 'for the matter of that, but I should have been dead long ago but for the 'Squire's family. He gives me the run of his kitchen, and Miss Lucilla allows me half a crown a week, for one day's work and any odd hour I can spare; but she don't let me earn it, for she is always watching for fear it should be too hot or too cold, or too wet for me: and she brings me my dose of bark herself into this tool-house, that she may be sure I take it; for she says servants and poor people like to have medicines provided for them, but don't care to take them. Then she watches that I don't throw my coat on the wet grass, which, she says, gives labouring men so much rheumatism; and she made me this nice flannel waistcoat, Sir, with her own hands. At Christmas they gave me a new suit from top to toe, so that I want nothing but a more thankful heart, for I never can be grateful enough to God and my Benefactors.'

I asked some further questions, only to have the pleasure of hearing him talk longer about Lucilla. 'But, Sir,' said he, interrupting me, 'I hear bad news, very bad news. Pray your honour forgive me.' 'What do you mean, James?' said I, seeing his eye fill. 'Why, Sir, all the servants at the Grove will have it that you are come to carry off Miss Lucilla. God bless her whenever she goes. Your Mr. Edwards, Sir, says you are one of the best of gentlemen, but indeed, indeed, I don't know who can deserve her. She will carry a blessing wherever she goes.' The honest fellow put up the sleeve of his coat to brush away his tears, nor was I ashamed of those with which his honest affection filled my own eyes. While we were talking, a poor little girl, who I knew by her neat uniform belonged to Miss Stanley's school, passed us with a little basket in her hand. James called to her, and said, 'make haste, Rachel, you are after your time.'

'What, this is market day, James, is it,' said Dr. Barlow, 'and Rachel is come for her nosegays?' 'Yes, Sir,' said James; 'I forgot to tell their honours, that every Saturday, as soon as the school is over, the younger Misses give Rachel leave to come and fetch some flowers out of her garden, which she carries to the town to sell; she commonly gets a shilling, half of which they make her lay out to bring home a little tea for her poor sick mother, and the other half she lays up to buy shoes and stockings for herself and her crippled sister. Every little is a help where there is nothing, Sir.'

Sir John said nothing, but looked at Lady Belfield, whose eyes glistened while she softly said, 'O how little do the rich ever think what the aggregate even of their own squandered shillings would do in the way of charity, were they systematically applied to it.'

James now unlocked a little private door, which opened into the pleasure ground. There, at a distance, sitting in a circle on the new-mown grass, under a tree, we beheld all the little Stanleys, with a basket of flowers between them, out of which they were earnestly employed in sorting and tying up nosegays. We stood some time admiring their little busy faces and active finger's without their perceiving us, and got up to them just as they were putting their prettily formed bouquets into Rachel's basket, with which she marched off, with many charges from the children to waste no time by the way, and to be sure and leave the nosegay that had the myrtle in it at Mrs. Williams's.

'How many nosegays have you given to Rachel to-day, Louisa?' said Dr. Barlow to the eldest of the four. 'Only three a-piece, Sir,' replied she. 'We think it a bad day when we can't make up our dozen. They are all our own; we seldom touch mamma's flowers, and we never suffer James to take ours, because Phœbe said it might be tempting him.' Little Jane lamented that Lucilla had given them nothing to-day, except two or three sprigs of her best flowering myrtle, which, added she, 'we make Rachel give into the bargain to a poor sick lady, who loves flowers, and used to have good ones of her own, but who has now no money to spare, and could not afford to give more than the common price for a nosegay for her sick room! So we always slip a nice flower or two out of the green-house into her little bunch, and say nothing. When we walk that way we often leave her some flowers ourselves, and would do it oftener, if it did not hurt poor Rachel's trade.'

As we walked away from the sweet prattlers, Dr. Barlow said, 'These little creatures already emulate their sisters in associating some pretty kindness with their own pleasures. The act is trifling, but the habit is good; as is every habit which helps to take us out of self; which teaches

us to transfer our attention from our own gratification, to the wants and pleasures of another.'

'I confess,' said Lady Belfield, as we entered the house, 'that it never occurred to me that it was any part of charity to train my children to the habit of sacrificing their time or their pleasure for the benefit of others, though, to do them justice, they are very feeling and very liberal with their money.'

'My dear Caroline,' said Sir John, 'it is our money, not their's. It is, I fear, a cheap liberality, and abridges not themselves of one enjoyment. They well know we are so pleased to see them charitable, we shall instantly repay them with interest, whatever they give away, so that we have hitherto afforded them no opportunity to show their actual dispositions. Nay I begin to fear they may become charitable through covetousness, if they find out that the more they give the more they shall get. We must correct this artificial liberality as soon as we go home.'

CHAP. XXXI.

A few days after, Sir John Belfield and I agreed to take a ride to Mr. Carlton's, where we breakfasted. Nothing could be more rational than the whole turn of his mind, nor more agreeable and unreserved than his conversation. His behaviour to his amiable wife was affectionately attentive, and Sir John, who is a most critical observer, remarked that it was quite natural and unaffected. It appeared to be the result of esteem inspired by her merit, and quickened by a sense of his former unworthiness, which made him feel as if he could never do enough to efface the memory of past unkindness. He manifested evident symptoms of a mind earnestly intent on the discovery and pursuit of moral and religious truth; and from the natural ardour of his character, and the sincerity of his remorse, his attainments seemed likely to be rapid and considerable.

The sweet benignity of Mrs. Carlton's countenance was lighted up at our entrance with a smile of satisfaction. We had been informed with what pleasure she observed every accession of right-minded acquaintance which her husband made. Though her natural modesty prevented her from introducing any subject herself, yet when any thing useful was brought forward by others, she promoted it by a look compounded of pleasure and intelligence.

After a variety of topics had been despatched, the conversation fell on the prejudices which were commonly entertained by men of the world against religion. 'For my own part,' said Mr. Carlton, 'I must confess that no man had ever more and stronger prejudices to combat than myself. I mean not my own exculpation, when I add, that the imprudence, the want of judgment, and above all the incongruous mixtures and inconsistencies in many characters who are reckoned religious, and are ill calculated to do away the unfavourable opinions of men of an opposite way of thinking. As I presume that you, gentlemen, are not ignorant of the errors of my early life—error indeed is an appellation far too mild—I shall not scruple to own to you the source of those prejudices which retarded my progress, even after I became ashamed of my deviations from virtue. I had felt the turpitude of my habits long before I had courage to renounce them; and I renounced them long before I had courage to avow my abhorrence of them.'

Sir John and I expressed ourselves extremely obliged by the candour of his declaration, and assured him that his further declarations would not only gratify but benefit us.

'Educated as I had been,' said Mr. Carlton, 'in almost entire ignorance of religion, mine was rather an habitual indifference than a systematic unbelief. My thoughtless course of life, though it led me to hope that Christianity might not be true, yet had by no means been able to convince me that it was false. As I had not been taught to search for truth at the fountain, for I was unacquainted with the Bible, I had no readier means for forming my judgment, than by observing, though with a careless and casual eye, what effect religion produced in those who professed to be influenced by it.—My observations augmented my prejudices. What I saw of the professors increased my dislike of the profession. All the charges brought by their enemies, for I had been accustomed to weigh the validity of testimony, had not rivetted my dislike so much, as the difference between their own avowed principles and their obvious practice. Religious men should be the more cautious of giving occasion for reproach, as they know the world is always on the watch, and is more glad to have its prejudices confirmed than removed.

'I seized the moment of Mrs. Carlton's absence (who was just then called out of the room, but returned almost immediately) to observe, that what rooted my disgust, was, the eagerness with which the mother of my inestimable wife, who made a great parade of religion, pressed the marriage of her only child with a man whose conduct she knew to be irregular, and of whose principles she entertained a just, that is, an unfavourable opinion. To see, I repeat, the religious mother of Mrs. Carlton obviously governed in her zeal for promoting our union by motives as worldly as those of my poor father, who pretended to no religion at all, would have extremely lowered any respect which I might have previously been induced to entertain for characters of that description. Nor was this disgust diminished by my acquaintance with Mr. Tyrrel. I had known him while a professed man of the world, and had at that time, I fear, disliked his violent temper, his narrow mind, and his coarse manners, more than his vices.

'I had heard of the power of religion to change the heart, and I ridiculed the wild chimera. My contempt for this notion was confirmed by the conduct of Mr. Tyrrel in his new character. I found it had produced little change in him, except furnishing him with a new subject of discussion. I saw that he had only laid down one set of opinions, and taken up another, with no addition whatever to his virtues, and with the addition to his vices of spiritual pride

and self-confidence; for with hypocrisy I have no right to charge any man. I observed that Tyrrel and one or two of his new friends, rather courted attack than avoided it. They considered discretion as the infirmity of a worldly mind, and every attempt at kindness or conciliation as an abandonment of faith. They eagerly ascribed to their piety, the dislike which was often excited by their peculiarities. I found them apt to dignify the disapprobation which their singularity occasioned with the name of persecution. I have seen them take comfort in the belief that it was their religion which was disliked, when perhaps it was chiefly their oddities

'At Tyrrel's I became acquainted with your friends Mr. and Mrs. Ranby. I leave you to judge whether their characters, that of the lady especially, were calculated to do away my prejudices. I had learned from my favourite Roman poet a precept in composition, of never making a God appear, except on occasions worthy of a God, I have since had reason to think this rule as justly theological as it is classical. So thought not the Ranbys.

'It will indeed readily be allowed by every reflecting mind, as God is to be viewed in all his works, so his 'never-failing Providence ordereth all things both in heaven and on earth.' But surely there is something very offensive in the indecent familiarity with which the name of God and Providence is brought in on every trivial occasion, as was the constant practice of Mr. and Mrs. Ranby. I was not even then so illogical a reasoner as to allow a general and deny a particular providence. If the one were true, I inferred that the other could not be false. But I felt that the religion of these people was of a slight texture and a bad taste. I was disgusted with littleness in some instances, and with inconsistency in others. Still their absurdity gave me right to suspect their sincerity.

'Whenever Mrs. Ranby had a petty inclination to gratify, she had always recourse to what she called the *leadings of Providence*. In matters of no more moment than whether she should drink tea with one neighbour instead of another, she was *impelled*, or *directed*, or *overruled*. I observed that she always took care to interpret these *leadings* to her own state, and under their sanction she always did what her fancy led her to do. She professed to follow this guidance on such minute occasions, that I had almost said, her piety seemed a little impious. To the actual dispensations of Providence, especially when they came in a trying or adverse shape, I did not observe more submission than I had seen in persons who could not be suspected of religion. I must own to you also, that as I am rather fastidious, I began to fancy that vulgar language, quaint phrases, and false grammer, were necessarily connected with religion. The sacrifice of taste and elegance seemed indispensable, and I was inclined to fear that if *they* were right, it would be impossible to get to heaven with good English.'

'Though I grant there is some truth in your remarks, Sir,' said I, 'you must allow that when men are determined at all events to hunt down religious characters, they are never at a loss to find plausible objections to justify their dislike; and while they conceal, even from themselves, the real motive of their aversion, the vigilance with which they pry into the characters of men who are reckoned pious, is exercised with the secret hope of finding faults enough to confirm their prejudices.'

'As a general truth, you are perfectly right,' said Mr. Carlton; 'but at the period to which I allude, I had now got to that stage of my progress, as to be rather searching for instances to invite than to repel me in my inquiry.'

'You will grant, however,' said I, 'that it is a common effect of prejudice to transfer the faults of a religious man to religion itself. Such a man happens to have an uncouth manner, an awkward gesture, an unmodulated voice; his allusions may be coarse, his phraseology quaint, his language slovenly. The solid virtues which may lie disguised under these incumbrances go for nothing. The man is absurd, and therefore Christianity is ridiculous. Its truth, however, though it may be eclipsed, cannot be extinguished. Like its divine Author, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

'There was another repulsive circumstance,' replied Mr. Carlton, 'the scanty charities both of Tyrrel and his new friends, so inferior to the liberality of my father and of Mr. Flam, who never professed to be governed by any higher motive than mere feeling, strengthened my dislike. The calculations of mere reason taught me that the religious man who does not greatly exceed the man of the world in his liberalities, falls short of him; because the worldly man who gives liberally, acts above his principle, while the Christian who does no more, falls short of his. And though I by no means insist that liberality is a certain indication of piety, yet I will venture to assert that the want of the one is no doubtful symptom of the absence of the other.'

'I next resolved to watch carefully the conduct of another description of Christians, who come under the class of the formal and the decent. They were considered as more creditable, but I did not perceive them to be more exemplary. They were more absorbed in the world, and more governed by its opinion. I found them clamorous in defence of the church in words, but neither adorning it by their lives, nor embracing its doctrines in their hearts. Rigid in the observance of some of its external rites, but little influenced by its liberal principles and charitable spirit. They venerated the establishment merely as a political institution; but of her outward forms they conceived as comprehending the whole of her excellence. Of her spiritual beauty and superiority they seemed to have no conception. I observed in them less warmth of affection for those with whom they agreed in external profession, than of rancour for those who differed from them, though but a single shade, and in points of no importance. They were cordial haters, and frigid lovers. Had they lived in the early ages, when the church was split into parties by paltry disputes, they would have thought the controversy about the time of keeping Easter, of more consequence than the event itself, which that festival celebrates.'

'My dear Sir,' said I, as soon as he had done speaking, 'you have accounted very naturally for your prejudices. Your chief error seems to have consisted in the selection of the persons you adopted as standards. They all differed as much from the right as they differed from each other; and the truth is, their vehement desire to differ from each other was a chief cause why they departed so much from the right. But your instances were so unhappily chosen, that they proved nothing against Christianity. The two opposite descriptions of persons who deterred you from religion, and who passed muster in their respective corps, under the generic term of religious, would, I believe, be scarcely acknowledged as such by the soberly and soundly pious.'

'My own subsequent experience,' resumed Mr. Carlton, 'has confirmed the justness of your remark. When I began, through the gradual change wrought in my views and actions by the silent but powerful preaching of Mrs. Carlton's example, to have less interest in believing that Christianity was false, I then applied myself to search for reasons, to believe that it was true. But plain, abstract reasoning, though it might catch hold on beings who are all pure intellect, and though it might have given a right bias even to *my* opinions, would probably never have determined my conduct, unless I saw it clothed, as it were, with a body. I wanted examples which should influence me to act, as well as proofs which should incline me to believe; something which would teach me what to do, as well as what to think. I wanted exemplifications as well as precepts. I doubted of all merely speculative truth. I wanted, from beholding the effect, to refer back to the principle. I wanted arguments more palpable and less theoretic. Surely, said I to myself, if religion be a real principle it must be an operative one, and I would rationally infer that Christianity were true, if the tone of Christian practice were high.

'I Began to look clandestinely into Henrietta's Bible. There indeed I found that the spirit of religion was invested with just such a body as I had wished to see; that it exhibited actions as well as sentiments, characters as well as doctrines; the life pourtrayed evidently governed by the principle inculcated; the conduct and the doctrine in just correspondence. But if the Bible be true, thought I, may we not reasonably expect, that the principles which once produced the exalted practice which that Bible records will produce similar effects now?

'I put, rashly perhaps, the truth of Christianity on this issue, and sought society of a higher stamp. Fortunately, the increasing external decorum of my conduct, began to make my reception less difficult among good men than it had been. Hitherto, and that for the sake of my wife, my visits had rather been endured than encouraged; nor was I myself forward to seek the society which shunned me. Even of those superior characters, with whom I did occasionally associate, I had not come near enough to form an exact estimate.'

'DISINTERESTEDNESS AND CONSISTENCY had become with me a sort of touch-stone, by which to try the characters I was investigating. My experiment was favourable. I had for some time examined my wife's conduct, with a mixture of admiration as to the act, and incredulity as to the motive. I had seen her foregoing her own indulgences, that she might augment those of a husband whom she had so little reason to love. Here were the two qualities I required, with a renunciation of self without parade or profession. Still this was a solitary instance. When, on a nearer survey, I beheld Dr. Barlow exhibiting, by his exemplary conduct during the week, the best commentary on his Sunday's sermon: when I saw him refuse a living of nearly twice the value of that he possessed, because the change would diminish his usefulness, I was *staggered*.

'When I saw Mr. and Mrs. Stanley spending their time and fortune as entirely in acts of beneficence, as if they had built their hope on charity alone, and yet utterly renouncing any such confidence, and trusting entirely to another foundation;—when I saw Lucilla, a girl of eighteen, refusing a young nobleman of a clear estate, and neither disagreeable in his person or manner, on the single avowed ground of his loose principles; when the noble rejection of the daughter was supported by the parents, whose principles no arguments drawn from rank or fortune could subvert or shake—I was *convinced*.

'These, and some other instances of the same nature, were exactly the test I had been seeking. Here was *disinterestedness* upon full proof. Here was *consistency* between practice and profession. By such examples, and by cordially adopting those principles which produced them, together with a daily increasing sense of my past enormities, I hope to become in time less unworthy of the wife to whom I owe my peace on earth, and my hope in heaven.'

The tears which had been collecting in Mrs. Carlton's eyes for some time, now silently stole down her cheeks. Sir John and myself were deeply affected with the frank and honest narrative to which we had been listening. It raised in us an esteem and affection for the narrator which has since been continually augmenting. I do not think the worse of his state, for the difficulties which impeded it, nor that his advancement will be less sure, because it has been gradual. His fear of delusion has been a salutary guard. The apparent slowness of his progress has arisen from his dread of self-deception, and the diligence of his search is an indication of his sincerity.

'But did you not find,' said I, 'that the piety of these more correct Christians drew upon them nearly as much censure and suspicion as the indiscretion of the enthusiasts? And that the formal class who were nearly as far removed from effective piety as from wild fanaticism, ran away with all the credit of religion?'

'With those,' replied Mr. Carlton, 'who are on the watch to discredit Christianity, no consistency can stand their determined opposition; but the fair and candid inquirer will not reject the truth, when it forces itself on the mind with a clear and convincing evidence.'

Though I had been joining in the general subject, yet my thoughts had wandered from it

to Lucilla, ever since her noble rejection of Lord Staunton had been named by Mr. Carlton as one of the causes which had strengthened his unsteady faith. And while he and Sir John were talking over their youthful connections, I resumed with Mrs. Carlton, who sat next me, the interesting topic.

'Lord Staunton,' said she, 'is a relation, and not a very distant one, of ours. He used to take more delight in Mr. Carlton's society when it was less improving, than he does now, that it is become really valuable; yet he often visits us. Miss Stanley now and then indulges me with her company for a day or two. In the visits Lord Staunton happened to meet her two or three times. He was enchanted with her person and manners, and exerted every art and faculty of pleasing, which, it must be owned, he possesses. Though we should both have rejoiced in an alliance with the excellent family at the Grove, through this sweet girl, I thought it my duty not to conceal from her the irregularity of my cousin's conduct in one particular instance, as well as the general looseness of his religious principles. The caution was the more necessary, as he had so much prudence and good breeding as to behave with general propriety when under our roof; and he allowed me to speak to him more freely than any other person. When I talked seriously, he sometimes laughed, always opposed, but was never angry.

'One day he arrived quite unexpectedly when Miss Stanley was with me. He found us in my dressing-room reading together a *Dissertation on the power of religion to change the heart.* Dreading some levity, I strove to hide the book. but he took it out of my hand, and glancing his eye on the title, he said, laughing, 'This is a foolish subject enough; a *good heart* does not want changing, and with a *bad* one none of *us three* having any thing to do.' Lucilla spoke not a syllable. All the light things he uttered, and which he meant for wit, so far from raising a smile, increased her gravity. She listened, but with some uneasiness, to a desultory conversation between us, in which I attempted to assert the power of the Almighty to rectify the mind, and alter the character. Lord Staunton treated my assertion as a wild chimera, and said, 'He was sure I had more understanding than to adopt such a methodistical notion; professing at the same time a vague admiration of virtue and goodness, which he said, bowing to Miss Stanley, were *natural* where they existed at all; that a good heart did not want mending, and a bad one could not be mended, with other similar expressions, all implying contempt of my position, and exclusive compliment to her.

'After dinner, Lucilla stole away from a conversation which was not very interesting to her, and carried her book to the summer-house, knowing that Lord Staunton liked to sit long at table. But his lordship, missing her for whom the visit was meant, soon broke up the party, and hearing which way she took, pursued her to the summer-house. After a profusion of compliments, expressive of his high admiration, he declared his passion in very strong and explicit terms, and requested her permission to make proposals to her father, to which he conceived she could have no possible objection.

'She thanked him with great politeness for his favourable opinion, but frankly told him, that though extremely sensible of the honour he intended her, thanks were all she had to offer in turn; she earnestly desired the business might go no further, and that he would spare himself the trouble of an application to her father, who always kindly allowed her to decide for herself, in a concern of so much importance.

'Disappointed, shocked, and irritated at a rejection so wholly unexpected, he insisted on knowing the cause. Was it his person? was it his fortune? was it his understanding to which she objected? She honestly assured him it was neither. His rank and fortune were above her expectations. To his natural advantages there could be no reasonable objection. He still vehemently insisted on her assigning the true cause. She was then driven to the necessity of confessing that she feared his principles were not those of a man with whom she could venture to trust her own.

'He bore this reproof with more patience than she had expected. As she had made no exception to his person and understanding, both of which he rated very highly, he could bear with the charge brought against his principles, on which he did not set so great a value. She had indeed wounded his pride, but not in the part where it was most vulnerable. 'If that be all,' said he gaily, 'the objection is at an end; your charming society will reform me, your influence will raise my principles, and your example will change my character.'

'What, my Lord,' said she, her courage increasing with her indignation, 'this from *you*! From you, who declared only this morning, that the work of changing the heart was too great for the Almighty himself? You do not now scruple to declare that it is in *my* power. That work which is too hard for Omnipotence, your flattery would make me believe a weak girl can accomplish. No my lord, I will never add to the number of those rash women who have risked their eternal happiness on this vain hope. It would be too late to repent of my folly, after my presumption had incurred its just punishment.'

'So saying, she left the summer-house with a polite dignity, which, as she afterwards told me, increased his passion, while it inflamed his pride almost to madness. Finding she refused to appear, he quitted the house, but not his design. His applications have since been repeated, but though he has met with the firmest repulses, both from the parents and the daughter, he cannot be prevailed upon to relinquish his hope. It is so far a misfortune to us, as Lucilla now never comes near us, except he is known not to be in the country. Had the objection been to his person, or fortune, he says, as it would have been substantial, it might have been insuperable; but where the only ground of difference is mere matter of opinion, he is sure that time and perseverance will conquer such a chimerical objection.'

I returned to the Grove, not only cured of

every jealous feeling, but transported with such a decisive proof of the dignity and purity of Miss Stanley's mind.

CHAP. XXXII.

Miss Sparkes, a neighbouring lady. whom the reputation of being a wit and an Amazon, had kept single at the age of five and forty, though her person was not disagreeable, and her fortune was considerable, called in one morning while we were at breakfast. She is remarkable for her pretension to odd and opposite qualities. She is something of a scholar, and a huntress, a politician, and a farrier. She out-rides Mr. Flam, and out-argues Mr. Tyrrel; excels in driving four in hand, and in canvassing at an election. She is always anxious about the party, but never about the candidate, in whom she requires no other merit, but his being in the opposition, which she accepts as a pledge for all other merit. In her adoption of any talent, or her exercise of any quality, it is always sufficient recommendation to her that it is not feminine.

From the window we saw her descend from her lofty phæton, and when she came in,

> The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,

the loud voice, the intrepid look, the independent air, the whole deportment indicated a disposition rather to confer protection than to accept it.

She made an apology for her intrusion, by saying that her visit was rather to the stable than the breakfast room. One of her horses was a little lame, and she wanted to consult Mr. Stanley's groom, who it seems was her oracle in that science, in which she herself is a professed adept.

During her short visit, she laboured so sedulously, not to diminish by her conversation the character she was so desirous to establish, that her efforts defeated the end they aimed to secure. She was witty with all her mirth, and her sarcastic turn, for wit it was not, made little amends for her want of simplicity. I perceived that she was fond of the bold, the marvellous, and the incredible. She ventured to tell a story of two, so little within the verge of ordinary probability, that she risked her credit for veracity, without perhaps really violating truth. The credit acquired by such relations seldom pays the relater for the hazard run by the communication.

As we fell into conversation, I observed the peculiarities of her character. She never sees any difficulties in any question. Whatever topic is started, while the rest of the company are hesitating as to the propriety of their determination, she alone is never at a loss. Her answer always follows the proposition, without a moment's interval for examination herself, or, for allowing any other person a chance of delivering an opinion.

Mr. Stanley, who always sets an example of strict punctuality to his family, had to-day come in to perform his family devotions somewhat latter than usual. I could perceive that he had been a little moved. His countenance wanted something of its placid serenity, though it seemed to be a seriousness untinctured with anger. He confessed, while we were at breakfast, that he had been spending above an hour, in bringing one of his younger children to a sense of a fault she had committed. 'She has not,' said he, 'told an absolute falsehood, but in what she said there was a prevarication, there was pride, there was passion. Her perverseness has at length given way. Tears of resentment are changed into tears of contrition. But she is not to appear in the drawing-room to-day. She is to be deprived of the honour of carrying food to the poor in the evening. Nor is she to furnish her contingent of nosegay to Rachel's basket. This is a mode of punishment we prefer to that of curtailing any personal indulgences: the importance we should assign to the privation would be setting too much value on the enjoyment.'

'You should be careful Mr. Stanley, said Miss Sparkes, 'not to break the child's spirits. Too tight a rein will check her generous ardour, and curb her genius. I would not subdue the independence of her mind, and make a tame, dull animal, of a creature whose very faults give indications of a soaring nature.' Even Lady Belfield, to whose soft and tender heart the very sound of punishment, or even privation, carried a sort of terror, asked Mr. Stanley, 'if he did not think that he had taken up a trifling offence too seriously, and punished it too severely.'

'The thing is a trifle in itself,' replied he, 'but infant prevarication unnoticed, and unchecked, is the prolific seed of subterfuge, of expediency, of deceit, of falsehood, of hypocrisy.'

'But the dear little creature,' said Lady Belfield, 'is not addicted to equivocation.—I have always admired her correctness in her pleasant prattle.'

'It is for the very reason,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that I am so careful to check the first indication of the contrary tendency.—As the fault is a solitary one, I trust the punishment will be so too. For which reason I have marked it in a way to which her memory will easily recur. Mr. Brandon, an amiable friend of mine, but of an indolent temper, through a negligence in watching over an early propensity to deceit, suffered his only son to run on from one stage of falsehood to another, till he settled down in a most consummate hypocrite. His plausible manners enabled him to keep his more turbulent vices out of sight. Impatient when a youth of that contradiction to which he had never been accustomed when a boy, he became notoriously profligate. His dissimulation was at length too thin to conceal from his mistaken father his more palpable vices. His artifices finally involved him in a duel, and his premature death broke the heart of my poor friend.

'This sad example led me in my own family to watch the evil in the bud. Divines often say, that unbelief lies at the root of all sin. This seems strikingly true in our conniving at the faults of our children. If we really believed the denunciation of Scripture, could we for the sake of a momentary gratification, not so much

to our child as to ourselves, (which is the case in all blameable indulgence,) overlook that fault which may be the germ of unspeakable miseries! In my view of things, deceit is no slight offence. I feel myself answerable in no small degree for the eternal happiness of these beloved creatures whom Providence has especially committed to my trust.'

'But it is such a severe trial,' said Lady Belfield, 'to a fond parent to inflict voluntary pain!'

'Shall we feel for their pain and not for their danger?' replied Mr. Stanley. 'I wonder how parents, who love their children as I love mine, can put in competition a temporary indulgence, which may foster one evil temper, or fasten one bad habit, with the eternal welfare of that child's soul. A soul of such inconceivable worth, whether we consider its nature, its duration, or the price which was paid for its redemption! What parent, I say, can by his own rash negligence, or false indulgence, risk the happiness of such a soul, not for a few days or years, but for a period compared with which the whole duration of time is but a point?—A soul of such infinite faculties, which has a capacity for improving in holiness and happiness, through all the countless ages of eternity?'

Observing Sir John listen with some emotion, Mr. Stanley went on; 'what remorse, my dear friend, can equal the pangs of him who has reason to believe that his child has not only lost this eternity of glory, but incurred an eternity of misery, through the carelessness of that parent, who assigned his very fondness as a reason for his neglect?—Think of the state of such a father, when he figures to himself the thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits that stand before the throne, and his darling excluded!—excluded perhaps by his own ill-judging fondness. Oh, my friends, disguise it as we may, and deceive ourselves as we will, want of faith is as much at the bottom of this sin as of all others. Notwithstanding an indefinite, indistinct notion which men call faith, they do actually *believe* in this eternity; they believe it in a general way, but they do not believe in it practically, personally, influentially.'

While Mr. Stanley was speaking with an energy which evinced how much his own heart was affected, Miss Sparkes, by the impatience of her looks, evidently manifested that she wished to interrupt him. Good breeding, however, kept her silent till he had done speaking: she then said, 'that though she allowed that absolute falsehood, and falsehood used for mischievous purposes was criminal, yet there was a danger on the other hand of laying too severe restrictions on freedom of speech. That there might be such a thing as tacit hypocrisy. That people might be guilty of as much deceit by suppressing their sentiments if just, as by expressing such as were not quite correct.—That a repulsive treatment was calculated to extinguish the fire of invention. She thought also that there were occasions where a harmless falsehood might not only be pardonable, but laudable. But then she allowed, that a falsehood to be allowed must be inoffensive.'

Mr. Stanley said, 'that an inoffensive falsehood was a perfect anomaly. But allowing it possible, that an individual instance of deceit might be passed over, which however he never could allow, yet one successful falsehood, on the plea of doing good, would necessarily make way for another, till the limits which divide right and wrong would be completely broken down, and every distinction between truth and falsehood be utterly confounded.—If such latitude were allowed, even to obtain some good purpose, it would gradually debauch all human intercourse. The smallest deviation would naturally induce a pernicious habit, endanger the security of society, and violate an express law of God.'

'There is no tendency,' said Sir John Belfield, 'more to be guarded against among young persons of warm hearts and lively imaginations. The feeling will think falsehood good if it is meant to *do* good, and the fanciful will think it justifiable if it is ingenious.'

Phœbe, in presenting her father with a dish of coffee, said in a half whisper, 'surely, papa, there can be no harm in speaking falsely on a subject where I am ignorant of the truth.'

'There are occasions, my dear Phœbe,' replied her father, 'in which ignorance itself is a fault. Inconsiderateness is always one. It is your duty to deliberate before you speak. It is your duty not to deceive by your negligence in getting at the truth; or by publishing false information as truth, though you have reason to suspect it may be false. You well know who it is that associates him that *loveth* a lie with him that *maketh* it.'

'But, Sir,' said Miss Sparkes, 'if by a falsehood I could preserve a life, or save my country, falsehood would then be meritorious, and I should glory in deceiving.'

'Persons, Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'who, in debate, have a favourite point to carry, are apt to suppose extreme cases, which *can* and *do* very rarely if ever occur. This they do in order to compel the acquiescence of an opponent to what ought never to be allowed. It is a proud and fruitless speculation. The infinite power of God can never stand in need of the aid of a weak mortal to help him out of his difficulties.—If he sees fit to preserve the life, or save the country, he is not driven to such shifts. Omnipotence can extricate himself, and accomplish his own purposes without endangering an immortal soul.'

Miss Sparkes took her leave soon after, in order, as she said, to go to the stable and take the groom's opinion. Mr. Stanley insisted that her carriage should be brought round to the door, to which we all attended her. He inquired which was the lame horse. Instead of answering, she went directly up to the animal, and after patting him with some technical jockey phrases, she fearlessly took up his hind leg, carefully examined his foot, and while she continued standing in what appeared to the ladies a perilous, and to me a disgusting situation, she run over all the terms of the veterinary art with the groom, and when Miss Stanley expressed some fear of her danger, and some dislike of her coarseness, she burst into a loud laugh, and slapping her on the shoulder, asked her if it was not better to understand the properties and diseases of so noble an animal, than to waste her time in studying confectionary with old Goody

Comfit, or in teaching the catechism to little ragged beggar-brats?

As soon as she was gone, the lively Phœbe, who, her father says, has narrowly escaped being a wit herself, cried out, 'Well, papa, I must say that I think Miss Sparkes with all her faults is rather an agreeable woman.' 'I grant that she is amusing,' returned he, 'but I do not allow her to be quite agreeable. Between these, Phœbe, there is a wide distinction. To a correct mind, no one can be agreeable who is incorrect. Propriety is so indispensable to agreeableness, that when a lady allows herself to make any, even the smallest, sacrifice of veracity, religion, modesty, candour, or the decorums of her sex, she may be shining, she may be showy, she may be amusing, but she cannot, properly speaking, be agreeable.—Miss Sparkes, I very reluctantly confess, does sometimes make these sacrifices, in a degree to alarm her own principles. She would not tell a direct falsehood for the world: she does not indeed invent, but she embellishes, enlarges, she exaggerates, she discolours. In her moral grammar there is no positive or comparative degree. Pink with her is scarlet. The noise of a pop-gun is a cannon. A shower is a tempest. A person of small fortune is a beggar. —One in easy circumstances is a Crœsus.—A girl, if not perfectly well made, is deformity personified; if tolerable, a Grecian Venus. Her favourites are Angels, her enemies Dæmons.

She would be thought very religious, and I hope that she will one day become so; yet she sometimes treats serious things with no small levity, and though she would not originally say a very bad word, yet she makes no scruple of repeating, with great glee, profane stories told by others. Besides she possesses the dangerous art of exciting an improper idea, without using an improper word. Gross indecency would shock her, but she often verges so far towards indelicacy, as to make Mrs. Stanley uneasy. Then she is too much of a genius to be tied down by any considerations of prudence. If a good thing occurs, out it comes, without regard to time or circumstance. She would tell the same story to a bishop, as to her chambermaid. If she says a right thing, which she often does, it is seldom in the right place. She makes her way in society without attaching many friends. Her bon mots are admired and repeated; yet I never met with a man of sense who, though he may join in flattering her, did not declare, as soon as she was out of the room, that he would not for the world that she should be his wife or daughter. It is irksome to her to converse with her own sex, while she little suspects that ours is not properly grateful for the preference with which she honours us.

'She is,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'charitable with the purse, but not with her tongue; she relieves her poor neighbours, and indemnifies herself by slandering her rich ones.—She has, however, many good qualities, is generous, feeling, and humane, and I would on no account speak so freely of a lady whom I receive at my house, were it not that, if I were quite silent, after Phœbe's expressed admiration, she might conclude that I saw nothing to condemn in Miss es and might be copying her faults, under the notion that being entertaining made amends for every thing.'

CHAP. XXXIII.

One morning, Sir John coming in from his ride, gaily called out to me, as I was reading, 'Oh, Charles, such a piece of news! the Miss Flams are converted. They have put on tuckers—they were at church twice on Sunday—Blair's Sermons are sent for, and *you* are the reformer.' This ludicrous address reminded Mr. Stanley, that Mr. Flam had told him we were all in disgrace; for not having called on the ladies, and it was proposed to repair this neglect.

'Now take notice,' said Sir John, 'if you do not see a new character assumed. Thinking Charles to be a fine man of the town, the modish racket, which indeed is their natural state, was played off, but it did not answer. As they probably, by this time, suspect your character to be somewhat between the Strephon and the Hermit, we shall now, in return, see something between the wood nymph and the nun; I shall not wonder if the extravagantly modish Miss Bell

Is now Pastora by a fountain's side.

Though I would not attribute the change to the cause assigned by Sir John, yet I confess we found, when we made our visit, no small revolution in Miss Bell Flam. The part of the Arcadian Nymph, the reading lady, the lover of retirement, the sentimental admirer of domestic life, the censurer of thoughtless dissipation, was each acted in succession, but so skilfully touched, that the shades of each melted in the other without any of those violent transitions which a less experienced actress would have exhibited. Sir John slily, yet with affected gravity, assisting her to sustain this newly adopted character, which, however, he was sure would last no longer than this visit.

When we returned home we met the Miss Stanleys in the garden, and joined them. 'Don't you admire,' said Sir John, 'the versatility of Miss Bell's genius? You, Charles, are not the first man on whom an assumed fondness for rural delights has been practised. A friend of mine was drawn in to marry, rather suddenly, a thorough-paced town-bred lady, by her repeated declarations of her passionate fondness for the country, and the rapture she expressed when rural scenery was the subject. All she knew of the country was, that she had now and then been on a party of pleasure at Richmond, in the fine summer months; a great dinner at the Star and Garter, gay company, a bright day, lovely scenery, a dance on the green, a partner to her taste, French horns on the water, altogether constituted a feeling of pleasure, from which she had really persuaded herself that she was fond of the country. But when all these concomitants were withdrawn, when she had lost the gay partner, the dance, the horns, the flattery and the frolic, and nothing was left but her books, her own dull mansion, her domestic employments, and the sober society of her husband,

the pastoral vision vanished. She discovered, or rather *he* discovered, but too late, that the country had not only no charms for her, but that it was a scene of constant *ennui* and vapid dullness. She languished for the pleasures she had quitted, and for the comforts she had lost. Opposite inclinations led to opposite pursuits; difference of taste, however, needed not to have led to total disunion, had there been on the part of the lady such a degree of attachment as might have induced a spirit of accommodation, or such a fund of principle as might have taught her the necessity of making those sacrifices which affection, had it existed, would have rendered pleasant, or duty would have made light, had she been early taught self-government.'

Miss Stanley, smiling said, 'she hoped Sir John had a little overcharged the picture.' He defended himself by declaring he drew from life, and that from his long observation he could present us with a whole gallery of such portraits. He left me to continue my walk with the two Miss Stanleys.

The more I conversed with Lucilla, the more I saw that good breeding in her was only the outward expression of humility, and not an art employed for the purpose of enabling her to do without it. We continued to converse on the subject of Miss Flam's fondness for the gay world. This introduced a natural expression of my admiration of Miss Stanley's choice of pleasures and pursuits, so different from those of most other women of her age.

With the most graceful modesty she said, 'nothing humbles me more than compliments; for when I compare what I hear with what I feel, I find the picture of myself, drawn by a flattering friend, so utterly unlike the original in my own heart, that I am more sunk by my own consciousness of the want of resemblance, than elated that another had not discovered it. It makes me feel like an impostor. If I contradict this favourable opinion, I am afraid of being accused of affectation; and if I silently swallow it, I am contributing to the deceit of passing for what I am not.' This ingenuous mode of disclaiming flattery only raised her in my esteem, and the more, as I told her such humble renunciation of praise could only proceed from that inward principle of genuine piety, and devout feeling, which made so amiable a part of her character.

'How little,' said she, 'is the human heart known except to him who made it. While a fellow creature may admire our apparent devotion, He who appears to be its object, witnesses the wandering of the heart, which seems to be lifted up to him. He sees it roving to the ends of the earth, busied about any thing rather than himself; running after trifles which not only dishonour a Christian, but would disgrace a child. As to my very virtues, if I dare apply such a word to myself, they sometimes lose their character by not keeping their proper place. They become sins by infringing on higher duties. If I mean to perform an act of devotion, some crude plan of charity forces itself on my mind, and what with trying to drive out one, and to establish the other, I rise dissatisfied and unimproved, and resting my sole hope not on the duty which I have been performing, but on the mercy which I have been offending.'

I assured her, with all the simplicity of truth, and all the sincerity of affection, that this confession only served to raise my opinion of the piety she disclaimed, that such deep consciousness of imperfection, so quick a discernment of the slightest deviation, and such constant vigilance to prevent it, were the truest indications of an humble spirit; and that those who thus carefully guarded themselves against small errors, were in little danger of being betrayed into great ones.

She replied, smiling, that 'she should not be so angry with vanity, if it would be contented to keep its proper place among the vices; but her quarrel with it was, that it would mix itself with our virtues, and rob us of their reward.'

'Vanity, indeed,' replied I, 'differs from the other vices in this: *they* commonly are only opposite to the one contrary virtue, while this vice is a kind of ubiquity, is on the watch to intrude every where, and weakens all the virtues which it cannot destroy. I believe vanity was the harpy of the ancient poets, which tell us tainted whatever it touched.'

'Self-deception is so easy,' replied Miss Stanley, 'that I am even afraid of highly extolling any good quality, lest I should sit down satisfied with having borne my testimony in its favour, and so rest contented with the praise instead of the practice. Commending a right thing is a cheap substitute for doing it, with which we are too apt to satisfy ourselves.'

'There is no mark,' I replied, 'which more clearly distinguishes that humility which has the love of God for its principle, from its counterfeit, a false and superficial politeness, than that, while this flatters, in order to extort in return more praise than is due, humility like the divine principle from which it springs, seeketh not even its own.'

In answer to some further remark of mine, with an air of infinite modesty, she said, 'I have been betrayed, Sir, into saying too much. It will, I trust however, have the good effect of preventing you from thinking better of me than I deserve. In general, I hold it indiscreet to speak of the state of one's mind. I have been taught this piece of prudence by my own indiscretion. I once lamented to a lady the fault of which we have been speaking, and observed how difficult it was to keep the heart right. She so little understood the nature of this inward corruption, that she told in confidence to two or three friends, that they were all much mistaken in Miss Stanley, for though her character stood so fair with the world, she had secretly confessed to her that she was a great sinner.'

I could not forbear repeating, though she had chid me for it before, how much I had been struck with several instances of her indifference to the world, and her superiority to its pleasures. 'Do you know,' continued she, smiling, 'that you are more my enemy than the lady of whom I have been speaking? She only defamed my principles, but you are corrupting them. The world, I believe, is not so much a place as a nature. It is possible to be religious in a court and worldly in a monastery. I find that the thought-

may be engaged too anxiously about so petty a concern as a little family arrangement; that the mind may be drawn off from better pursuits, and engrossed by things too trivial to name, as much as by objects more apparently wrong. The country is certainly favourable to religion, but it would be hard on the millions who are doomed to live in towns if it were exclusively favourable. Nor must we lay more stress on the accidental circumstance than it deserves. Nay I almost doubt if it is not too pleasant to be quite safe. An enjoyment which assumes a sober shape may deceive us, by making us believe we are practising a duty when we are only gratifying a taste.'

'But do you not think,' said I, 'that there may be merit in the taste itself? May not a succession of acts forming a habit, and that habit a good one, induce so sound a way of thinking, that it may become difficult to distinguish the duty from the taste, and to separate the principle from the choice? This I really believe to be the case in minds finely wrought and vigilantly watched.

I observed that however delightful the country might be a great part of the year, yet there were a few winter months when I feared it might be dull, though not in the degree Sir John Richmond's lady had found it.

With a smile of compassion at my want of taste, she said 'she perceived I was no gardener. To me,' added she, 'the winter has charms of its own, If I were not afraid of the light habit of introducing Providence on an occasion not sufficiently important, I would say that he seems to reward those who love the country well enough to live in it the whole year, by making the greater part of the winter the busy season for gardening operations. If I happen to be in town a few days only, every sun that shines, every shower that falls, every breeze that blows, seems wasted, because I do not see their effect upon my plants.' 'But surely,' said I, 'the winter at least suspends your enjoyment. There is little pleasure in contemplating vegetation in its torpid state, in surveying

The naked shoots, barren as lances,

as Cowper describes the winter shrubbery.'

'The pleasure is in the preparation,' replied she. 'When all appears dead and torpid to you idle spectators, all is secretly at work; nature is busy in preparing her treasures under ground, and art has a hand in the process. When the blossoms of summer are delighting you mere amateurs, then it is that we professional people,' added she, laughing, 'are really idle. The silent operations of the winter now produce themselves —the canvass of nature is covered—the great Artist has laid on his colours—then we petty agents lay down our implements, and enjoy our leisure in contemplating *his* work.'

I had never known her so communicative; but my pleased attention, instead of drawing her on, led her to check herself. Phœbe, who had been busily employed in trimming a flaunting yellow Azalia, now turned to me, and said —'Why, it is only the Christmas month that our labours are suspended, and then we have so much pleasure that we want no business; such in-door festivities and diversions, that the dull month is with us the gayest in the year.' So saying she called Lucilla to assist her in tying up the branch of an orange-tree, which the wind had broken.

I was going to offer my services when Mrs. Stanley joined us, before I could obtain an answer to my question about these Christmas diversions. A stranger, who had seen me pursuing Mrs. Stanley in her walks, might have supposed not the daughter, but the mother was the object of my attachment. But with Mrs. Stanley I could always talk of Lucilla, with Lucilla I durst not often talk of herself.

The fond mother and I stood looking with delight on the fair gardeners. When I had admired their alacrity in these innocent pursuits, their fondness for retirement, and their cheerful delight in its pleasures; Mrs. Stanley replied, 'yes, Lucilla is half a nun. She likes the rule, but not the vow. Poor thing! her conscience is so tender that she oftener requires encouragement than restraint. While she was making this plantation, she felt herself so absorbed by it, that she came to me one day, and said that her gardening work so fascinated her, that she found whole hours passed unperceived, and she began to be uneasy by observing that all cares and all duties were suspended while she was disposing beds of Carnations, or knots of Anemonies. Even when she tore herself away, and returned to her employments, her flowers still pursued her, and the improvement of her mind gave way to the cultivation of her Geraniums.'

'"I am afraid," said the poor girl, "that I must really give it up." I would not hear of this. I would not suffer her to deny herself so pure a pleasure. She then suggested the expedient of limiting her time, and hanging up her watch in the conservatory to keep her within her prescribed bounds. She is so observant of this restriction, that when her allotted time is expired, she forces herself to leave off even in the most interesting operation. By this limitation a treble end is answered. Her time is saved, self-denial is exercised, and the interest which would languish, by protracting the work is kept in fresh vigour.' I told Mrs. Stanley that I had observed her watch hanging in a citron tree the day I came, but little thought it had a moral meaning. She said, 'it had never been left there since I had been in the house for fear of causing interrogatories.' Here Mrs. Stanley left me to my meditations.

It was wisely ordered that all mortal enjoyment should have some alloy. I never tasted a pleasure since I had been at the Grove, I never witnessed a grace, I never heard related an excellence of Lucilla without a sigh that my beloved parents did not share my happiness. 'How would they,' said I, delight in her delicacy, rejoice in her piety, love her benevolence, admire her humility, her usefulness! O how do children feel, who wound the peace of *living* parents by an unworthy choice, when not a little of my comfort springs from the certainty that the departed would rejoice in mine. Even from their blessed abode, my grateful heart seems to

hear them say, 'This is the creature with whom we *shall* r.joice with thee through all eternity!'

Yet such was my inconsistency, that charmed as I was, that so young and lovely a woman could be so cheaply pleased, and delighted with that simplicity of taste which made her resemble my favourite heroine of Milton in her amusements as well as in her domestic pursuits; still I longed to know what those Christmas diversions, so slightly hinted at, could be; diversions which could reconcile these girls to their absence not only from their green-house, but from London. I could hardly fear indeed to find at Stanley Grove what the newspapers pertly call *Private Theatricals*. Still I suspected it might be some gay dissipation, not quite suited to their general character, nor congenial to their amusements. My mother's favourite rule of *consistency* strongly forced itself on my mind, though I tried to repel the suggestion as unjust and ungenerous.

Of what meannesses will not love be guilty! It drove me to have recourse to my friend Mrs. Comfit to dissipate my doubts.—From her I learned that that cold and comfortless season was mitigated at Stanley Grove by several feasts for the poor of different classes and ages. 'Then, Sir,' continued she, 'if you could see the blazing fires, and the abundant provisions! the roasting, and the boiling, and the baking. The house is all alive! On those days the drawers and shelves of Miss Lucilla's store-room are completely emptied. 'Tis the most delightful bustle, Sir, to see our young ladies tying on the good women's warm cloaks, fitting their caps and aprons, and sending home blankets to the infirm who cannot come themselves.—The very little ones kneeling down on the ground to try on the poor girl's shoes; even little Miss Celia; and she is so tender to fit them exactly, and not hurt them! Last feast-day, not finding a pair small enough for a poor little girl, she privately slipt off her own and put on the child. It was some time before it was discovered that she herself was without shoes. We are all alive, Sir. Parlour, and hall, and kitchen, all is in motion! Books, and business, and walks, and gardening, all is forgotten for these few happy days.'

How I hated myself for my suspicion!—And how I loved the charming creatures who could find in these humble but exhilirating duties, an equivalent for the pleasures of the metropolis! 'Surely,' said I to myself, 'my mother would call *this* consisteney, when the amusements of a religious family smack of the same flavour with its business and its duties.' My heart was more than easy; it was dilated, while I congratulated myself in the thought that there *were* young ladies to be found who could spend a winter not only unrepiningly, but cheerfully and delightedly in the country.

I am aware that were I to repeat my conversations with Lucilla, I should subject myself to ridicule, by recording such cold and spiritless discourse on my own part. But I had not yet declared my attachment. I made it a point of duty not to violate my engagement with Mr. Stanley. I was not addressing declarations, but studying the character of her on whom the happiness of my life was to depend. I had resolved not to show my attachment by any overt act. I confined the expression of my affection to that *series of small, quiet attentions*, which an accurate judge of the human heart has pronounced to be the surest avenue to a delicate mind. I had, in the mean time, the inexpressible felicity to observe a constant union of feeling, as well as a general consonancy of opinion between us. Every sentiment seemed a reciprocation of sympathy, and every look, of intelligence. This unstudied correspondence enchanted me the more, as I had always considered that a conformity of tastes was nearly as necessary to conjugal happiness, as a conformity of principles.

CHAP. XXXIV.

One morning I took a ride alone to breakfast at Lady Aston's, Mr. Stanley having expressed a particular desire that I should cultivate the acquaintance of her son. 'Sir George is not quite twenty,' said he, 'and your being a few years older, will make him consider your friendship as an honour to him: I am sure it will be an advantage.'

In her own little family circle, I had the pleasure of seeing Lady Aston appear to more advantage than I had yet done. Her understanding is good, and her affections are strong. She had received a too favourable prepossession of my character from Mr. Stanley, and treated me with as much openness as if I had been his son.

The gentle girls, animated by the spirit of their brother, seemed to derive both happiness and importance from his presence; while the amiable young Baronet himself won my affection by his engaging manners, and my esteem by his good sense, and his considerable acquirements in every thing which becomes a gentleman.

This visit exemplified a remark I had sometimes made, that shy characters, who from natural timidity are reserved in general society, open themselves with peculiar warmth and frankness to a few select friends, or to an individual of whom they think kindly. A distant manner is not always, as is suspected, the result of a cold heart, or a dull head; nor is gaiety necessarily connected with feeling. High animal spirits, though they often evaporate in mere talk, yet by their warmth and quickness of motion, obtain the credit of strong sensibility; a sensibility however, of which the heart is not always the fountain. While in the timid, that silence, which is construed into pride, indifference, or want of capacity, is often the effect of keen feelings. Friendship is the genial climate in which such hearts disclose themselves; they flourish in the shade, and kindness alone makes them expand. A keen discerner will often detect, in such characters, qualities which are not always connected with

> The rattling tongue
> Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

When people who have seen little of each other are thrown together, nothing brings on

free communication so quickly or so pleasantly, as their being both intimate with a third person, for whom all parties entertain one common sentiment. Mr. Stanley seemed always a point of union between his neighbours and me.

After various topics had been discussed, Lady Aston remarked, that she could now trace the goodness of Providence in having so ordered events, as to make those things which she had so much dreaded at the time, work out advantages which could not have been otherwise obtained for her.

'I had a singular aversion,' added she, 'to the thoughts of removing to this place, and quitting Sir George's estate in Warwickshire, where I had spent the happiest years of my life. When I had the misfortune to lose him,' (here a tear quietly strayed down her cheek,) 'I resolved never to remove from the place where he died. I had fully persuaded myself that it was a duty to do all I could to cherish grief. I obliged myself, as a law, to spend whole hours every day in walking round the place where he was buried.—These melancholy visits, the intervals of which were filled with tears, prayers, and reading a few good but not well chosen books, made up the whole round of my sad existence. I had nearly forgotten that I had any duties to perform, that I had any mercies left. Almost all the effect which the sight of my children produced in me was, by their resemblance to their father, to put me in mind of what I had lost.

I was not sufficiently aware how much more truly I should have honoured his memory, by training his lively representatives, in such a manner, as he, had he been living, would have approved. 'My dear George,' said she, smiling at her son, through her tears, 'was glad to get away to school, and my poor girls, when they lost the company of their brother, lost all the little cheerfulness which my recluse habits had left them. We sunk into total inaction, and our lives became as comfortless as they were unprofitable.'

'My dear Madam,' said Sir George, in the most affectionate tone and manner, 'I can only forgive myself from the consideration of my being then too young and thoughtless to know the value of the mother, whose sorrows ought to have endeared my home to me, instead of driving me from it.'

'They are *my* faults, my dear George, and not yours that I am relating. Few mothers would have acted like me; few sons differently from you. Your affectionate heart deserved a warmer return than my broken spirits were capable of making you. But I was telling you, Sir,' said she, again addressing herself to me, 'that the event of my coming to this place, not only became the source of my present peace, and of the comfort of my children, but that its result enables me to look forward with a cheerful hope to that state where there is neither sin, sorrow, nor separation. The thoughts of death, which used to render me useless, now make me only serious. The reflection that 'the night cometh,' which used to extinguish my activity, now kindles it.

'Forgive me, Sir,' added she, wiping her eyes, 'these are not such tears as I then shed. These are tears of gratitude, I had almost said of joy In the family at the Grove, Providence had been providing for me friends, for whom, I doubt not, I shall bless him in eternity.

'I had long been convinced of the importance of religion. I had always felt the insufficiency of the world to bestow happiness; but I had never before beheld religion in such a form. I had never been furnished with a proper substitute for the worldly pleasures which I yet despised, I did right in giving up diversions, but I did wrong in giving up employment, and in neglecting duties. I knew something of religion as a principle of fear, but I had no conception of it as a motive to the love of God, and as the spring of active duty; nor did I consider it as a source of inward peace. Books had not been of any great service to me, for I had no one to guide me in the choice, or to assist me in the perusal. I went to my daily task of devotion with a heavy heart, and returned from it with no other sense of comfort but that I had not omitted it.

'My former friends and acquaintances had been decent and regular; but they had adopted religion as a form, and not as a principle. It was compliance and not conviction. It was conformity to custom, and not the persuasion of the heart. Judge then how I must have been affected, in a state when sorrow and disappointment had made my mind peculiarly impressible, with the conversation and example of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley! I saw in them that religion was not a formal profession, but a powerful principle. It ran through their whole life and character. All the Christian graces were brought into action in a way, with a uniformity and a beauty, which nothing but Christian motives could have effected.

'The change which took place in my own mind, however, was progressive. The strict consonance which I observed between their sentiments and actions, and those of Dr. Barlow and Mr. Jackson strengthened and confirmed mine. This similarity in all points, was a fresh confirmation that they were all right. The light of religion gradually grew stronger, and the way more smooth. It was literally a 'lamp to my feet,' for I walked more safely as I saw more clearly. My difficulties insensibly lessened, and my doubts disappeared. I still indeed continue hourly to feel much cause to be humbled, but none to be unhappy.'

When Lady Aston had done speaking, Sir George said, 'I owe a thousand obligations to my mother, but not one so great as her introduction of me to Mr. Stanley. He has given a bent and bias to my sentiments, habits and pursuits, to which I trust every day will add fresh strength. I look up to him as my model: happy if I may, in any degree, be able to form myself by it! Till I had the happiness of knowing you, Sir, I preferred the company of Dr. Barlow and Mr. Stanley, to that of any *young* man with whom I am acquainted.'

After some further conversation, in which Sir George, with great credit to himself, bore a considerable part; Miss Aston took courage to ask me if I would accompany them all into the garden, as she wished me to carry home intelligence to Miss Stanley, of the flourishing state

of some American plants, which had been raised under her direction. To speak the truth, I had for some time been trying to bring Lucilla on the tapis, but had not found a plausible pretence, I now inquired if Miss Stanley directed their gardoning pursuits. 'She directs *all* our pursuits,' said the two bashful, blushing girls, who now, for the first time in their lives, spoko both at once; the subject kindling an energy in their affectionate hearts, which even their timidity could not rein in.

'I thought Clara,' said Sir George, 'that Miss *Phœbe* Stanley too had assisted in laying out the flower garden. Surely she is not behind her sister in any thing that is kind, or any thing that is elegant.' His complexion heightened as he spoke, and he expressed himself with an emphasis, which I had not before observed in his manner of speaking. I stole a glance at Lady Aston, whose meek eye glistened with pleasure, at the earnestness with which her son spoke of the lovely Phœbe. My rapid imagination instantly shot forward to an event, which some years hence will probably unite two families so worthy of each other. Lady Aston, who already honours me with her confidence, afterwards confirmed my suspicions on a subject, about which nothing but the extreme youth of both parties made her backward to express the secret hope she fondly entertained.

In our walk round the gardens, the Miss Astons continued to vie with each other, who should be warmest in the praise of our young friends at the Grove. To Miss Stanley they gratefully declared, they owed any little taste, knowledge, or love of goodness which they themselves might possess.

It was delightful to observe these quiet girls warmed and excited by a subject so interesting. I was charmed to see them so far from feeling any shadow of envy at the avowed superiority of their young friends, and so unanimously eloquent in the praise of merit so eclipsing.

After having admired the plants of which I promised to make a favourable report, I was charged with a large and beautiful bouquet for the young ladies at the Grove. They then drew me to the prettiest spot in the grounds. While I was admiring it, Miss Clara, with a blush, and some hesitation, begged leave to ask my advice about a little rustic building, which she and her sisters were just going to raise in honour of the Miss Stanleys. It was to be dedicated to them, and called the Temple of Friendship. 'My brother,' said she, 'is kindly assisting us. The materials are all prepared, and we have now only to fix them up.'

She then put into my hands a little plan. I highly approved it; venturing, however, to suggest some trifling alterations, which I told them I did in order to implicate myself a little in the pleasant project. How proud was I when Clara added, 'that Miss Stanley had expressed a high opinion of my general taste!'—They all begged me to look in on them in my rides, and assist them with my farther counsel; adding that, above all things, I must keep it a secret at the Grove.

Lady Aston said, 'that she expected our whole party to dine at the Hall, some day next week. Her daughters entreated that it might be postponed till the latter end, by which time they doubted not their little edifice would be completed. Sir George then told me, that his sisters had requested him to furnish an inscription, or to endeavour to procure one from me. He added his wishes to theirs that I would comply. They all joined so earnestly in the entreaty that I could not withstand them, 'albeit unused to the *rhyming* mood.'

After some deliberation, Friday in the next week was fixed upon for the party at the Grove to dine at Aston-Hall, and I was to carry the invitation. I took a respectful leave of the excellent Lady of the mansion, and an affectionate one of the young people; with whom the familiar intercourse of this quiet morning had contributed to advance my friendly acquaintance, more than could have been done by many ceremonious meetings.

When I returned to the Grove, which was but just in time to dress for dinner, I spoke with sincere satisfaction of the manner in which I had passed the morning. It was beautiful to observe the honest delight, the ingenuous kindness, with which Lucilla heard me commend the Miss Astons. No little disparaging hint on the one hand, gently to let down her friends, nor on the other, no such exaggerated praise as I have sometimes seen employed as a screen for envy, or as a trap to make the hearer lower what the speaker had too highly raised.

I dropped in at Aston-Hall two or three times in the course of the week, as well to notice the progress of the work, as to carry my inscription, in which as Lucilla was both my subject and my muse, I succeeded rather better than I expected.

On the Friday, according to appointment, our whole party went to dine in the Hall. In our way, Mr. Stanley expressed the pleasure it gave him, that Lady Aston was now so convinced of the duty of making home agreeable to her son, as delightedly to receive such of her friends as were warmly disposed to become his.

Sir George, who is extremely well-bred, did the honours admirably for so young a man, to the great relief of his excellent mother, whom long retirement had rendered habitually timid in a party, of which some were almost strangers.

The Miss Astons had some difficulty to restrain their young guests from running directly to look at the progress of the American plants; but as they grew near the mysterious spot, they were not allowed to approach it before the allotted time.

After dinner, when the whole party were walking in the garden, Lady Aston, was desired by her daughters to conduct her company to a winding grass walk, near the little building, but from whence it was not visible. While they were all waiting at the appointed place, the two elder Miss Astons gravely took a hand of Lucilla, Sir George and I each presented a hand to Phœbe, and in profound silence, and great ceremony, we led them up the turf steps into this simple, but really pretty temple. The initials of Lucilla and Phœbe were carved in

cyphers over a little rustic window, under which was written,

Sacred to Friendship.

In two niches prepared for the purpose, we severally seated the two astonished nymphs, who seemed absolutely enchanted. Above was the inscription in large Roman letters.

The Astons looked so much alive, that they might have been mistaken for Stanleys, who in their turn, were so affected with this tender mark of friendship, that they looked as tearful as though they had been Astons. After reading the inscription, 'my dear Clara,' said Lucilla to Miss Aston, 'where *could* you get these beautiful verses? Though the praise they convey is too flattering to be just, it is too delicate not to please. The lines are at once tender and elegant.' 'We got them,' said Miss Aston, with a sweet vivacity, 'where we get every thing that is good, from Stanley Grove,' bowing modestly to me.

How was I elated; and how did Lucilla blush! but though she now tried to qualify her flattery, she could not recal it. And I would not allow myself to be robbed of the pure delight it had given me. All the company seemed to enjoy her confusion and my pleasure.

I forgot to mention, that as we crossed the park, we had seen enter the house, through a back avenue, a procession of little girls neatly dressed in a uniform. In a whisper, I asked Lady Aston what it meant, 'you are to know,' replied her ladyship, 'that my daughters adopt all Miss Stanley's plans, and among the rest, that of associating with all their own indulgences some little act of charity, that while they are receiving pleasure, they may also be conferring it. The opening of the Temple of Friendship, is likely to afford too much gratification to be passed over without some such association. So my girls give to day a little feast, with prizes of merit, to their village school, and to a few other deserving young persons.'

When we had taken our seats in the temple, Phœbe suddenly cried out, clasping her hands in an ecstacy, 'Only look Lucilla! There is no end to the enchantment. It is all fairy land.' On casting our eyes as she directed, we were agreeably surprised with observing a large kind of temporary shed or booth at some distance from us. It was picturesquely fixed near an old spreading oak, and was ingeniously composed of branches of trees, fresh and green. Under the oak stood ranged the village maids. We walked to the spot. The inside of the booth was hung round with caps, aprons, bonnets, handkerchiefs, and other coarse, but neat articles of female dress. On a rustic table was laid a number of Bibles, and specimens of several kinds of coarse works, and little manufactures. The various performances were examined by the company; some presents were given to all. But additional prizes were awarded by the young Patronesses, to the best specimens of different work; to the best spinners, the best knitters, the best manufacturers of split straw, and the best performers in plain work, I think they called it.

Three grown up young women, neatly dressed, and of modest manner, stood behind. It appeared that one of them had taken such good care of her young sisters and brothers, since their mother's death, and had so prudently managed their father's house, that it had saved him from an imprudent second choice. Another had postponed for many months a marriage, in which her heart was engaged, because she had a paralytic grandmother whom she attended day and night, and whom nothing, not even love itself, could tempt her to desert. Death had now released the aged sufferer, the wedding was to take place next Sunday. The third had for above a year worked two hours every day, over and above her set time, and applied the gains to clothe the orphan child of a deceased friend. She also was to accompany her lover to the altar on Sunday, but had made it a condition of her marrying him, that she should be allowed to continue her supernumerary hours work, for the benefit of the poor orphan. All three had been exemplary in their attendance at church, as well as in their general conduct. The fair Patronesses presented each with a handsome Bible, and with a complete, plain, but very neat suit of apparel.

While these gifts were distributing, I whispered Sir John that one such ticket as we were desired to take for Squallini's benefit, would furnish the cottages of these poor girls. 'And it *shall*,' replied he with emphasis. 'How little a way will that sum go in superfluities, which will make two honest couple happy! How costly is vanity, how cheap is charity!'

'Can these happy, useful young creatures be my little, inactive, insipid Astons, Charles?' whispered Mr. Stanley, as we walked away to leave the girls to sit down to their plentiful supper, which was spread on a long table under the oak, without the green booth. This group of figures made an interesting addition to the scenery, when we got back to the Temple, and often attracted our attention while we were engaged in conversation.

CHAP. XXXV

The company were not soon weary of admiring the rustic building, which seemed raised as if by the stroke of a magician's wand, so rapidly had it sprung up. They were delighted to find that their pleasure was to be prolonged by drinking tea in the temple.

While we were at tea Mr. Stanley, addressing himself to me, said, 'I have always forgotten to ask you, Charles, if your high expectations of pleasure from the society in London had been quite answered?'

'I was entertained, and I was disappointed,' replied I. 'I always found the pleasure of the moment not heightened but effaced by the succeeding moment. The ever restless, rolling tide of new intelligence at once gratified and excited the passion of novelty, which I found to be *le grand poisson qui mange les petits*. This successive abundance of fresh supply gives an ephemeral importance to every thing, and a lasting importance to nothing. We skimmed every topic, but dived into none. Much desultory talk, but little discussion. The combat-

tants skirmished like men whose arms were kept bright by constant use; who were accustomed to a flying fight, but who avoided the fatigue of coming to close quarters. What was old, however momentous, was rejected as dull, what was new, however insignificant, was thought interesting. Events of the past week were placed with those beyond the flood; and the very existence of occurrences which continue to be matter of deep interest with us in the country, seemed there totally forgotten.

'I found, too, that the inhabitants of the metropolis had a standard of merit of their own; that knowledge of the town was concluded to be knowledge of the world; that local habits, reigning phrases, temporary fashions, and an acquaintance with the surface of manners, was supposed to be knowledge of mankind. Of course, he who was ignorant of the topics of the hour, and the anecdotes of a few modish leaders, was ignorant of human nature.'

Sir John observed, that I was rather too young to be a *praiser of past times*, yet he allowed that the standard of conversation was not so high as it had been in the time of my father, by whose reports my youthful ardour had been inflamed. He did not indeed suppose that men were less intellectual now, but they certainly were less colloquially intellectual. 'For this,' added he, 'various reasons may be assigned. In London man is every day becoming less of a social, and more of a gregarious animal. Crowds are as little favourable to conversation as to reflection. He finds, therefore, that he may figure in the mass with less expense of mind: and as to women they figure at no expense at all. They find that by mixing with myriads, they may carry on the daily intercourse of life, without being obliged to bring a single idea to enrich the common stock.'

'I do not wonder,' said I, 'that the dull and uninformed love to shelter their insignificance in a crowd. In mingling with the multitude, their deficiencies elude detection. The vapid and the ignorant are like a bad play; they owe the little figure they make to the dress, the scenery, the music, and the company. The noise and the glare take off all attention from the defects of the work. The spectator is amused, and he does not inquire whether it is with the piece or the accompaniments. The end is attained, and he is little solicitous about the means. But an intellectual woman, like a well written drama, will please at home without all these aids and adjuncts, nay the beauties of the superior piece, and of the superior woman, will rise on a more intimate survey. But you were going, Sir John, to assign other causes for the decline and fall of conversation.'

'One very affecting reason,' replied he, 'is that the alarming state of public affairs fills all men's minds with one momentous object. As every Englishman is a patriot, every patriot is a politician. It is natural that that subject should fill every mouth, which occupies every heart, and that little room should be left for extraneous matter.'

'I should accept this,' said I, 'as a satisfactory vindication, had I heard that the same absorbing cause had thinned the public places, or diminished the attraction of the private resorts of dissipation.'

'There is a third reason,' said Sir John, 'polite literature has in a good degree given way to experimental philosophy. The admirers of science assert, that the last was an age of words, and that this is the age of things. A more substantial kind of knowledge has partly superseded these elegant studies, which have caught such hold on your affections.'

'I heartily wish,' replied I, 'that the new pursuits may be found to make men wiser; they certainly have not made them more agreeable.'

'It is affirmed,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that the prevailing philosophical studies have a religious use, and that they naturally tend to elevate the heart to the great Author of the Universe.'

'I have but one objection to that assertion,' replied Sir John, 'namely, that it is not true. This should seem indeed, to be their direct tendency; yet experiment, which you know is the soul of philosophy, has proved the contrary.'

He then adduced some instances in our country, which I forbear to name, that clearly evinced, that this was not their necessary consequence; adding, however, a few great names on the more honourable side. He next adverted to the Baillies, the Condorsets, the D'Alamberts, and the Lalandes, as melancholy proofs of the inefficacy of mere science to make Christians.

'Far be it from me,' said Sir John, 'to undervalue philosophical pursuits. The modern discoveries are extremely important, especially in their application to the purposes of common life; but where these are pursued exclusively, I cannot help preferring the study of the great classic authors, those exquisite masters of life and manners, with whose spirited conversation, twenty or thirty years ago, was so richly impregnated.'

'I confess,' said I, 'that there may be more matter, but there is certainly less mind in the reigning pursuits. The reputation of skill, it is true, may be obtained at a much less expense of time and intellect. The comparative cheapness of the acquisition holds out the powerful temptation of more credit with less labour. A sufficient knowledge of botany or chemistry to make a figure in company is easily obtained, while a thorough acquaintance with the historians, poets, and orators of antiquity requires much time, and close application.' 'But,' exclaimed Sir John, 'can the fashionable studies pretend to give the same expansion to the mind, the same elevation to the sentiments, the same energy to the feelings, the same stretch and compass to the understanding, the same correctness to the taste, the same grace and spirit to the whole moral and intellectual man?'

'For my own part,' replied I, 'so far from saying with Hamlet, "Man delights not me, nor woman neither," I confess, I have little delight in any thing else. The study of the human mind, is, of merely human studies, my chief pleasure. As a man, man is the creature with whom I have to do, and the varieties in his character interest me more than all the possible varieties of mosses, and shells, and fossils. To view this compound creature in the complexity of his actions, as portrayed by the hand of those

immortal masters, Tacitus and Plutarch; to view him in the struggle of his passions, as displayed by Euripides and Shakspeare: to contemplate him in the blaze of his eloquence, by the two rival orators of Greece and Rome, is more congenial to my feelings, than the ablest disquisition of which matter was ever the subject.' Sir John, who is a passionate, and rather too exclusive an admirer of classic lore, warmly declared himself of my opinion.

'I went to town,' replied I, 'with a mind eager for intellectual pleasure. My memory was not quite unfurnished with passages which I thought likely to be adverted to, and which might serve to embellish conversation, without incurring the charge of pedantry. But though, most of the men I conversed with were my equals in education, and my superiors in talent, there seemed little disposition to promote such topics as might bring our understanding into play. Whether it is that business, active life, and public debate, absorb the mind, and make men consider society rather as a scene to rest than to exercise it, I know not; certain it is that they brought less into the treasury of conversation than I expected; not because they were poor, but proud, or idle, and reserved their talents and acquisitions for higher occasions. The most opulent possessors, I often found the most penurious contributors.'

'*Rien de trop*,' said Mr. Stanley, 'was the favourite maxim of an author,* whom I am not apt to quote for rules of moral conduct. Yet its adoption would be a salutary check against excess in all our pursuits. If polite learning is undervalued by the mere man of letters: If it dignifies retirement, and exalts society, it is not the great business of life; it is not the prime fountain of moral excellence.'

'Well, so much for *man*,' said Sir John, 'but Charles, you have not told us what you had to say of *women*, in your observations on society.'

'As to women,' replied I, 'I declare that I found more propensity to promote subjects of taste and elegant speculation among some of the superior class of females, than in many of my own sex. The more prudent, however, are restrained through fear of the illiberal sarcasms of men, who not contented to suppress their own faculties, ridicule all intellectual exertion in women, though evidently arising from a modest desire of improvement, and not the vanity of hopeless rivalry.'

'Charles is always the Paladin of the reading ladies,' said Sir John. 'I do not deny it,' replied I, 'if they bear their faculties meekly. But I confess that what is sneeringly called a learned lady is to me far preferable to a scientific one, such as I encountered one evening, who talked of the fulcrum, and the lever, and the statera, which she took care to tell us was the Roman steel-yard, with all the sang-froid of philosophical conceit.'

'Scientific men,' said Sir John, 'are in general admirable for their simplicity, but in a technical woman I have seldom found a grain of taste or elegance.'

'I own,' replied I, 'I should greatly prefer a fair companion, who could modestly discriminate between the beauties of Virgil and Milton, to one who was always dabbling in chemistry, and who came to dinner with dirty hands from the labratory. And yet I admire chemistry too; I am now only speaking of that knowledge which is desirable in a female companion; for knowledge I must have. But arts, which are of immense value in manufactures, won't make my wife's conversation entertaining to me. Discoveries which may greatly improve dyeing and bleaching, will add little to the delights of our summer evening's walk, or winter fireside.'

The ladies, Lucilla especially, smiled at my warmth. I felt that there was approbation in her smile, and though I had said too much already, it encouraged me to go on.—'I repeat that, next to religion, whatever relates to human manners, is most attracting to human creatures. To turn from conversation to composition. What is it that excites so feeble an interest, in perusing that finely written poem of the *Abbe de Lille*, '*Les Jardins!*' It is because his garden has no cultivators, no inhabitants, no men and women. What confers that powerful charm on the descriptive parts of Paradise Lost? A fascination, I will venture to affirm, paramount to the lovely and magnificent scenery which adorns it. Eden itself, with all its exquisite landscape, would excite a very inferior pleasure did it exhibit only inanimate beauties. 'Tis the proprietors, 'tis the inhabitants, 'tis the *live stock* of Eden, which sieze upon the affections, and twine about the heart. The gardens, even of Paradise, would be dull without the gardeners. 'Tis mental excellence, 'tis moral beauty, which completes the charm. Where this is wanting, landscape poetry, though it may be read with pleasure, yet the interest it raises is cold. It is admired, but seldom remembered, praised, but seldom quoted. It leaves no definite idea on the mind. If general, it is indistinct; if minute, tedious.'

'It must be confessed,' said Sir John, 'that some poets are apt to forget that the finest representation of nature is only the scene, not the object; the canvass, not the portrait. We had indeed some time ago, so much of this gorgeous scene-painting, so much splendid poetical botany, so many amorous flowers, and so many vegetable courtships; so many wedded plants; roots transformed to nymphs, and dwelling in emerald palaces; that some how or other truth, and probability, and nature and man, slipt out of the picture, though it must be allowed that genius held the pencil.'

'In Mason's English Garden,' replied I, 'Alcander's precepts would have been no personification. The introduction of character dramatizes what else would have been frigidly didactic. Thompson enriched his landscape with here and there a figure, drawn with more correctness than warmth, with more nature than spirit, but exalts it every where by moral allusion and religious reference. The scenery of Cowper is perpetually animated with sketches of character, enlivened with portraits from real life, and the exhibition of human manners and passions. His most exquisite descriptions owe their vividness to moral illustration.—Loyalty,

* Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

liberty, patriotism, charity, piety, benevolence, every generous feeling, every glowing sentiment, every ennobling passion, grows out of his descriptive powers. His matter always bursts into mind. His shrubbery, his forest, his flower garden, all produce

Fruits worthy of Paradise,

and lead to immortality.'

Mr. Stanley said, adverting again to the subject of conversation, it was an amusement to him to observe, what impression the first introduction to general society made conversant with books, but to whom the world was in a manner new.

'I believe,' said Sir John, 'that an overflowing commerce, and the excessive opulence it has introduced, though favourable to all the splendours of art, and mechanic ingenuity, yet have lowered the standard of taste, and debilitated the mental energies.—They are advantageous to luxury, but fatal to intellect. It has added to the brilliancy of the drawing-room itself, but deducted from that of the inhabitant. It has given perfection to our mirrors, our candelabras, our gilding, our inlaying and our sculpture, but it has communicated a torpor to the imagination, and enervated our intellectual vigour.'

'In one way,' said Mr. Stanley, smiling, 'luxury has been favourable to literature.—From the unparalleled splendour of our printing, paper, engraving, illuminating, and binding, luxury has caused more books to be purchased, while, from the growth of time-absorbing dissipation, it causes fewer to be read. Even where books are not much considered as the vehicle of instruction they are become an indispensable appendage to elegance. But I believe we were much more familiar with our native poets in their former plain garb, than since they have been attired in the gorgeous dress which now decorates our shelves.

'Poetry,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'has of late too much degenerated into personal satire, persiflage and caricature, among one class of writers; while among another it has exhibited the vagrancies of genius, without the inspiration; the exuberance of fancy, without the curb of judgment, and the eccentricities of invention, without the restrictions of taste. The image has been strained, while the verse has been slackened. We have had pleonasm without fulness, and facility without force. Redundancy has been mistaken for plenitude, flimsiness for ease, and distortion for energy. An over desire of being natural, has made the poet feeble, and the rage for being simple has sometimes made him silly. The sensibility is sickly, and the elevation virtiginous.

'To Cowper,' said Sir John, 'master of melody as he is, the mischief is partly attributable. Such an original must naturally have a herd of imitators. If they cannot attain to his excellences, his faults are always attainable. The resemblance between the master and the scholar is found chiefly in his defects. The determined imitator of an easy writer becomes vapid, of a sublime one, absurd. Cowper's case appeared his most imitable charm: but ease aggravated is insipidity. His occasional negligences his disciples adopted uniformly. In Cowper there might sometimes be carelessness in the verse, but the verse itself was sustained by the vigour of the sentiment. The imitator forgot that his strength lay in the thought; that his buoyant spirit always supported itself, that the figure though amplified was never distorted; the image though bold was never incongruous, and the illustration though new was never false.

'The evil, however,' continued Sir John, 'seems to be correcting itself. The real genius, which exists in several of this whimsical school, I trust, will at length lead them to prune their excrescences, and reform their youthful eccentricities. Their good sense will teach them that the surest road to fame, is to condescend to tread in the luminous track of their great precursors in the art. They will see that deviation is not always improvement; that whoever wants to be better than nature, will infallibly be worse; that truth in taste is as obvious as in morals, and as certain as in mathematics. In other quarters, both the classic and the Gothic music are emulously soaring, and I hail the restoration of genuine poetry and pure taste.'

'I must not,' said I, 'loquacious as I have already been, dismiss the subject of conversation, without remarking that I found there was one topic, which seemed as uniformly avoided by common consent, as if it had been banished by the interdict of absolute authority; and that some forfeiture, or at least dishonour and disgrace, were to follow it on conviction—I mean religion.'

'Surely, Charles,' said Sir John, 'you would not convert general conversation into a divinity school, and friendly societies into debating clubs.'

'Far from it,' replied I, 'nor do I desire that ladies and gentlemen over their tea and coffee should rehearse their articles of faith, or fill the intervals of carving and eating with introducing dogmas, or discussing controversies. I do not wish to erect the social table, which was meant for innocent relaxation, into an arena for theological combatants. I only wish, as people live so much together, that if, when out of the multitude of topics which arise in conversation, an unlucky wight happens to start a serious thought, I could see a cordial recognition of its importance; I wish I could see a disposition to pursue it, instead of a chilling silence which obliges him to draw in, as if he had dropt something dangerous to the state, or inimical to the general cheerfulness, or derogatory to his own understanding. I only desire, that as, without any effort on the part of the speaker, but merely from the overflowing fulness of a mind habitually occupied with one leading concern, we easily perceive that one of the company is a lawyer, another a soldier, a third a physician; I only wish, that we could oftener discover from the same plenitude, so hard to conceal where it exists, that we were in a company of Christians.'

'We must not expect in our days,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to see revive that animating picture of the prevalence of religious intercourse given by the prophet. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." And yet one cannot but regret that, in select society, men well informed as we know, well principled as

we hope, having one common portion of being to fill, having one common faith, one common father, one common journey to perform, one common termination to that journey, and one common object in view beyond it, should, when together, be so unwilling to advert occasionally to these great points, which doubtless often occupy them in secret; that they should on the contrary adopt a sort of inverted hypocrisy, and wish to appear worse than they really are; that they should be so backward to give or to gain information, to lend or to borrow lights, in a matter in which they are all equally interested; which cannot be the case in any other possible subject.'

'In all human concerns,' said I, 'we find that those dispositions, tastes, and affections, which are brought into exercise, flourish, while others are smothered, by concealment. 'It is certain,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that knowledge which is never brought forward, is apt to decline. Some feelings require to be excited, in order to know if they exist. In short, topics of every kind, which are kept totally out of sight, make a fainter impression on the mind than such as are occasionally introduced. Communication is a great strengthener of any principle. Feelings, as well as ideas, are often elicited by collision. Thoughts that are never to be produced, in time seldom present themselves, while mutual interchange almost creates as well as cultivates them. And as to the social affections, I am persuaded that men would love each other more cordially; good will and kindness would be inconceivably promoted, were they in the habit of maintaining that sort of intercourse, which would keep up a mutual regard for their eternal interests, and lead them more to consider each other as candidates for the same immortality through the same common hope.'

Just as he had ceased to speak, we heard a warbling of female voices, which came softened to us by distance and the undulation of the air. The little band under the oak had finished their cheerful repast, and arranged themselves in the same regular procession in which they had arrived. They still stood at a respectful distance from the temple, and in their artless manner sung Addison's beautiful version of the twenty-third psalm, which the Miss Astons had taught them because it was a favourite with their mother.'

Here the setting sun reminded us to retreat to the house. Before we quitted the temple, however, Sir George Aston ventured modestly to intimate a wish, that if it pleased the Almighty to spare our lives, the same party should engage always to celebrate this anniversary in the Temple of Friendship, which should be finished on a larger scale, and rendered less unworthy to receive such guests. The ladies smiled assentingly. Phœbe applauded rapturously. Sir John Bel field and I warmly approved the proposal. Mr. Stanley said, it could not but meet with his cordial concurrence, as it would involve the assurance of an annual visit from his valued friends.

As we walked into the house, Lady Aston, who held by my arm, in answer to the satisfaction I expressed at the day I had passed, said, 'We owe what little we are and do under Providence to Mr. Stanley. You will admire his discriminating mind, when I tell you that he recommends these little exhibitions for my daughters far more than to his own. He says, that they, being naturally cheerful and habitually active, require not the incentive of company to encourage them. But that for my poor timid inactive girls, the support and animating presence of a few chosen friends, just gives them that degree of life and spirit which serves to warm their hearts, and keep their minds in motion.'

CHAP. XXXVI.

Miss Sparkes came to spend the next day, according to her appointment. Mr. Flam, who called accidentally staid to dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Carlton had been previously invited. After dinner, the conversation chanced to turn upon domestic economy, a quality which Miss Sparkes professed to hold in the most sovereign contempt.

After some remarks of Mrs. Stanley, in favour of the household virtues, Mr. Carlton said, Mr. Addison, in the Spectator, and Dr. Johnson, in the Rambler, have each given us a lively picture of a vulgar, ungentlewoman-like, illiterate housewife. The notable woman of the one suffocated her guests at night with drying herbs in their chamber, and tormented them all day with plans of economy, and lectures on management. The economist of the other ruined her husband by her parsimonious extravagance, if I may be allowed to couple contradictions; by her tent-stitch hangings, for which she had no walls, and her embroidery for which she had no use. The poor man pathetically laments her detestable catalogue of made wines, which hurt his fortune by their profusion, and his health by not being allowed to drink them till they were sour. Both ladies are painted as domestic tyrants, whose husbands had no peace, and whose children had no education.'

'Those coarse housewives,' said Sir John, 'were exhibited as *warnings*. It was reserved for the pen of Richardson to exhibit *examples*. This author, with deeper and juster views of human nature, a truer taste for the proprieties of female character, and a more exact intuition into real life, than any other writer of fabulous narrative, has given, in his heroines, exemplifications of elegantly cultivated minds, combined with the sober virtues of domestic economy. In no other writer of fictitious adventures has the triumph of religion and reason over the passions, and the now almost exploded doctrines of filial obedience, and the household virtues, their natural concomitants been so successfully blended. Whether the works of this most original, but by no means faultless writer, were cause or effect, I know not; whether these well-imagined examples induced the ladies of that day 'to study household good;' or whether the then existing ladies, by their acknowledged attention to feminine concerns, furnished Richardson with living models, I cannot determine. Certain it is, that

the novel writers of the subsequent period, have in general been as little disposed to represent these qualities as forming an indispensable part of the female character, as the contemporary young ladies themselves have been to supply them with patterns. I a little fear that the predominance of this sort of reading, has contributed its full share to bring such qualities into contempt.'

Miss Sparkes characteristically observed, that 'the meanest understanding and most vulgar education, were competent to form such a wife as the generality of men preferred. That a man of talents, dreading a rival, always took care to secure himself by marrying a fool.'

'Always except the present company, Madam, I presume,' said Mr. Stanley, laughing. 'But pardon me, if I differ from you. That many men are sensual in their appetites, and low in their relish of intellectual pleasures, I confess. That many others, who are neither sensual, nor of mean attainments, prefer women whose ignorance will favour their indolent habits, and whom it requires no exertion of mind to entertain, I allow also. But permit me to say, that men of the most cultivated minds, men who admire talents in a woman, are still of opinion, that *domestic* talents can never be dispensed with: and I totally dissent from you in thinking that these qualities infer the absence of higher attainments, and necessarily imply a sordid or a vulgar mind.

'Any ordinary art, after it is once discovered, may be practised by a very common understanding. In this, as in every thing else, the kind arrangements of Providence are visible, because, as the common arts employ the mass of mankind, they could not be universally carried on if they were not of easy and cheap attainment. Now cookery is one of these arts, and I agree with you, Madam, in thinking, that a mean understanding, and a vulgar education, suffice to make a good cook. But a cook or housekeeper; and a lady qualified to wield a considerable establishment, are two very different characters. To prepare a dinner, and to conduct a great family, requires talents of a very different size: and one reason why I could never choose to marry a woman ignorant of domestic affairs, is, that she who wants, or she who despises this knowledge, must possess that previous bad judgment which, as it prevented her from seeing this part of her duty, would be likely to operate on other occasions.

'I entirely agree with Mr. Stanley,' said Mr. Carlton. 'In general I look upon the contempt, or the fulfilment, of these duties as pretty certain indications of the turn of mind from which the one or the other proceeds. I allow, however, that *with* this knowledge a lady may unhappily have overlooked more important acquisitions; but *without* it I must ever consider the female character as defective in the texture, however it may be embroidered and spangled on the surface.'

Sir John Belfield declared, that though he had not that natural antipathy to a wit, which some men have; yet unless the wildness of a wit was tamed, like the wildness of other animals by domestic habits, he himself would not choose to venture on one. He added, that he should pay a bad compliment to Lady Belfield, who had so much higher claims to his esteem, if he were to allege that these habits were the determining cause of his choice, yet had he seen no such tendencies in her character, he should have suspected her power of making him as happy as she had done.'

'I confess with shame,' said Mr. Carlton, 'that one of the first things which touched me with any sense of my wife's merit, was the admirable good sense she discovered in the direction of my family. Even at the time that I had most reason to blush at my own conduct, she never gave me cause to blush for hers. The praises constantly bestowed on her elegant yet prudent arrangements, by my friends, flattered my vanity, and raised her in my opinion, though they did not lead me to do her full justice.'

The two ladies who were thus agreeably flattered, looked modestly grateful. Mr. Stanley said, 'I was going to endeavour at removing Miss Sparkes's prejudices, by observing how much this domestic turn brings the understanding into action. The operation of good sense is requisite in making the necessary calculations for a great family in a hundred ways. Good sense is required to teach that a perpetually recurring small expense is more to be avoided than an incidental great one; while it shows that petty savings cannot retrieve an injured estate. The story told by Johnson of a lady, who, while ruining her fortune by excessive splendour and expense, yet refused to let a two shilling mango be cut at her table, exemplifies exactly my idea. Shabby curtailments, without repairing the breach, which prodigality has made, discredit the husband, and bring the reproach of meanness on the wife. Retrenchments to be efficient must be applied to great objects. The true economist will draw in by contracting the outline, by narrowing the bottom, by cutting off with an unsparing hand costly superfluities, which affect not comfort, but cherish vanity.'

'"Retrench the lazy vermin of thine hall," was the wise counsel of the prudent Venetian, to his thoughtless son-in-law,' said Sir John, 'and its wisdom consisted in its striking at one of the most ruinous and prevailing domestic evils, an overloaded establishment.'

If Miss Sparkes had been so long without speaking, it was evident, by her manner and turn of countenance, that contempt had kept her silent, and that she thought the topic under discussion as unworthy of the support of the gentlemen as of her own opposition.

'A discreet woman,' said Mr. Stanley, 'adjusts her expenses to her revenues. Every thing knows its time, and every person his place. She will live within her income, be it large or small; if large, she will not be luxurious, if small she will not be mean. Proportion and propriety are among the best secrets of domestic wisdom; and there is no surer test both of integrity and judgment, than a well-proportioned expenditure.

'Now the point to which I would bring all this verbage,' continued he, 'is this,—will a lady of a mean understanding, or a vulgar edu

cation, be likely to practise economy on this large scale! And is not such economy a field in which a woman of the best sense may honourably exercise her own powers?'

Miss Sparkes, who was always a staunch opposer in moral as well as in political debate, because she said it was the best side for the exertion of wit and talents, comforted herself that though she felt she was completely in the minority, yet she always thought that was rather a proof of being right than the contrary; for if it be true, that the generality are either weak or wicked, it follows that the inferior number is most likely to be neither

'Women,' said Mr Carlton, 'in their course of action describe a smaller circle than men; but the perfection of a circle consists not in its dimensions, but in itse orrectness. There may be,' added he carefully turning away his eyes from Miss Sparkes, 'here and there a soaring female who looks down with disdain on the paltry affairs of "this dim speck called earth," who despises order and regularity as indications of a grovelling spirit. But a sound mind judges directly contrary. The larger the capacity, the wider is the sweep of duties it takes in. A sensible woman loves to imitate that order which is stamped on the whole creation of God. All the operations of nature are uniform even in their changes, and regular in their infinite variety. Nay, the great Author of Nature himself disdains not to be called the God of order.'

'I agree with you,' said Sir John. 'A philosophical lady may 'read Mallebranch, Boyle, and Locke:' she may boast of her intellectual superiority; she may talk of abstract and concrete; of substantial forms and essences; complex ideas and mixed modes, of identity and relation; she may decorate all the logic of one sex with all the rhetoric of the other; yet if her affairs are *delabres*, if her house is disorderly, her servants irregular, her children neglected, and her table ill arranged, she will indicate the want of the most valuable faculty of the human mind, a sound judgment.'

'It must, however, be confessed,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that such instances are so rare, that the exceptions barely serve to establish the rule. I have known twenty women mismanage their affairs, through a bad education, through ignorance, especially of arithmetic, that grand deficiency in the education of women, through a multiplicity of vain accomplishments, through an excess of dissipation, through a devotedness to personal embellishments, through an absorption of the whole soul in music, for one who has made her husband metaphysically miserable.'

'What marks the distinction,' said Mr. Carlton, 'between the judicious and the vulgar economist is this: the narrow-minded woman succeeds tolerably in the filling up, but never in the outline. She is made up of detail, but destitute of plan. Petty duties demand her whole grasp of mind, and after all the thing is incomplete. There is so much bustle and evident exertion in all she does! she brings into company a mind exhausted with her little efforts! overflowing with a sense of her own merits! looking up to her own performances as the highest possible elevation of the human intellect, and looking down on the attainments of more highly gifted women, as so many obstructions to their usefulness; always drawing comparisons to her own advantage, with the cultivated and the refined, and concluding that because she possesses not their elegance they must necessarily be deficient in her art. While economists of the higher strain, I draw from living and not absent instances,' added he, looking benignantly around him, 'execute their well ordered plan, as an indispensable duty, but not as a superlative merit. They have too much sense to omit it, but they have too much taste to talk of it. It is their business, not their boast. The effect is produced, but the hand which accomplishes it is not seen. The mechanism is set at work, but it is behind the scenes. The beauty is visible, the labour is kept out of sight.'

'The misfortune is,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that people are apt to fancy, that judgment is a faculty only to be exercised on great occasions; whereas it is one that every hour is called into exercise. There are certain habits, which though they appear inconsiderable when examined individually, are yet of no small importance in the aggregate. Exactness, punctuality, and other minor virtues, contribute more than many are aware, to promote and to facilitate the exercise of the higher qualities. I would not erect them into a magnitude beyond their real size; as persons are too apt to do who are *only* punctual, and are deficient in the higher qualities; but by the regular establishment of these habits in a family, it is inconceivable to those who have not made the experiment, how it saves, how it amplifies time, that canvass upon which all virtues must be wrought. It is incredible how an orderly division of the day gives apparent rapidity to the wings of time, while a stated devotion of the hour to its employment really lengthens life. It lengthens it by the traces which solid occupation leaves behind it: while it prevents tediousness by affording, with the successive change, the charm of novelty, and keeping up an interest which would flag, if any one employment were too long pursued. Now all these arrangements of life, these divisions of time, and these selections and appropriations of the business to the hour, come within the department of the lady.' And how much will the cares of a man of sense be relieved, if he choose a wife who can do all this for him!'

'In how many of my friends' houses,' said Mr. Carlton, 'have I observed the contrary habits produce contrary effects? A young lady bred in total ignorance of family management, transplanted from the house of her father, where she has learnt nothing, to that of her husband, where she is expected to know every thing, disappoints a prudent man: his affection may continue, but his esteem will be diminished; and with his happiness, his attachment to home will be proportionably lessened.'

'It is perfectly just,' said Sir John, 'and this comfortless deficiency has naturally taught men to inveigh against the higher kind of knowledge which they suppose, though unjustly, to be the cause of ignorance in domestic matters. It is not entirely to gratify the animal, as Miss Sparkes supposes, that a gentleman likes to

have his table well appointed; but because his own dignity and his wife's credit are involved in it. The want of this skill is one of the grand evils of modern life. *From the heiress of the man of rank, to the daughter of the opulent tradesman, there is no one quality in which young women are so generally deficient as in domestic economy.* And when I hear learning contended for on one hand, and modish accomplishments on the other, I always contend for this intermediate, this valuable, this neglected quality, so little insisted on, so rarely found, and so indispensably necessary.'

'Besides,' said Mr. Carlton, addressing himself to Miss Sparkes, 'you ladies are apt to consider versatility as a mark of genius. She therefore, who can do a great thing well, ought to do a small one better; for, as Lord Bacon well observes, he who cannot contract his mind as well as dilate it, wants one great talent in life.'

Miss Sparkes, condescending at length to break a silence which she had maintained with evident uneasiness, said, 'all these plodding employments cramp the genius, degrade the intellect, depress the spirits, debase the taste, and clip the wings of imagination. And this poor, cramped, degraded, stinted, depressed, debased creature is the very being whom men, men of reputed sense too, commonly prefer to the mind of large dimensions, soaring fancy, and aspiring tastes.'

'Imagination,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'well directed, is the charm of life; it gilds every object, and embellishes every scene: but allow me to say, that where a woman abandons herself to the dominion of this vagrant faculty, it may lead to something worse than a disorderly table; and the husband may find that the badness of his dinner is not the only ill consequence of her superlunary vagaries.'

'True enough,' said Mr. Flam, who had never been known to be so silent, or so attentive; 'true enough, I have not heard so much sense for a long time. I am sure 'tis sense, because 'tis exactly my own way of thinking. There is my Bell now. I have spent seven hundred pounds, and more money, for her to learn music and whim-whams, which all put together are not worth sixpence. I would give them all up to see her make such a transy-pudding, as that which the widow in the Spectator helped Sir Roger to at dinner: why I don't believe Bell knows whether pie-crust is made of butter or cheese; or whether a venison pasty should be baked or boiled. I can tell her, that when her husband, if she ever gets one, comes in sharp set from hunting, he won't like to be put off with a tune instead of a dinner. To marry a singing girl, and complain she does not keep you a good table, is like eating nightingales, and finding fault that they are not good tasted. They sing, but they are of no further use—to *eat* them, instead of listening to them, is applying to one sense, the gratification which belongs to another.'

In the course of conversation, Miss Sparkes a little shocked the delicate feelings of the ladies, of Lucilla especially, by throwing out some expressions of envy, at the superior advantages which men possess for distinguishing themselves. 'Women,' she said, 'with talents not inferior, were allowed no stage for display, while men had such a reach for their exertions, such a compass for exercising their genius, such a range for obtaining distinction, that they were at once the objects of her envy for the means they possessed, and of her pity for turning them to no better account. There were indeed,' she added, 'a few men who redeemed the credit of the rest, and for their sakes she gloried, since she could not be of their sex, that she was at least of their species.'

'I know, Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'your admiration of heroic qualities and manly virtues —courage for instance. But there are still nobler ways of exercising courage than even in the field of battle. There are more exalted means of showing spirit than by sending or accepting a challenge. To sustain a fit of sickness may exhibit as true heroism as to lead an army. To bear a deep affliction well calls for as high exertion of soul as to storm a town and to meet death with Christian resolution is an act of courage, in which many a woman has triumphed, and many a philosopher, and even some generals, have failed.

I thought I saw in Miss Sparkes's countenance a kind of civil contempt, as if she would be glad to exchange the patient sickness and heroic death-bed for the renown of victory and the glory of a battle: and I suspected that she envied the fame of the challenge, and the spirit of the duel more than those meek and passive virtues which we all agreed were peculiarly Christian, and peculiarly feminine.

CHAP. XXXVII.

In the afternoon, when the company were assembled in the drawing room, the conversation turned on various subjects. Mr. Flam, feeling as if he had not sufficiently produced himself at dinner, now took the lead. He was never solicitous to show what he called his learning, but when Miss Sparkes was present, whom it was his grand delight to *set down* as he called it. Then he never failed to give broad hints that if he was now no great student, it was not from ignorance, but from the pressure of more indispensable avocations.

He first rambled into some desultory remarks on the absurdity of the world, and the preposterousness of modern usages, which perverted the ends of education, and exalted things which were of least use into most importance.

'You seem out of humour with the world, Mr. Flam,' said Mr. Stanley. 'I hate the world,' returned he. 'It is indeed,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'a scene of much danger, because of much evil.'

I don't value the danger a straw,' rejoined Mr. Flam; 'and as to the evil, I hope I have sense enough to avoid that: but I hate it for its folly, and despise it for its inconsistency.'

'In what particulars, Mr. Flam?' said Sir John Belfield.

'In every thing,' replied he. 'In the first place, don't people educate their daughters entirely for holidays, and then wonder that they are of no use? Don't they charge them to be

modest, and teach them every thing that can make them bold? Are we not angry that they don't attend to great concerns, after having instructed them to take the most pains for the least things! There is my Fan now,—they tell me she can dance as well as a posture mistress, but she slouches in her walk like a milk maid. Now as she seldom dances, and is always walking, would it not be more rational to teach her to do that best which she is to do oftenest? She sings like a Syren, but 'tis only to strangers. I who paid for it, never heard her voice. She is, always warbling in a distant room, or in every room where there is company; but if I have the gout and want to be amused, she is as dumb as a dormouse.'

'So much for the errors in educating our daughters,' said Sir John, 'now for the sons.'

'As to our boys,' returned Mr. Flam, 'don't we educate them in one religion, and then expect them to practise another? Don't we cram them with books of heathen philosophy, and then bid them go and be good Christians? Don't we teach them to admire the heroes and gods of the old poets, when there is hardly one hero, and certainly not one god, who would not in this country have been tried at the Old Bailey, if not executed at Tyburn? And as to the goddesses, if they had been brought before us on the bench, brother Stanley, there is scarcely one of them but we should have ordered to the house of correction. The queen of them, indeed, I should have sent to the ducking stool for a scold.

'Then again don't we tell our sons, when men, that they must admire a monarchical government, after every pains have been taken, when they were boys, to fill them with raptures for the ancient republics?'

'Surely, Mr. Flam,' said Sir John, 'the ancient forms of government may be studied with advantage, were it only to show us by contrast the superior excellence of our own.'

'We might,' said Miss Sparkes, in a supercilious accent, 'learn some things from them which we much want. You have been speaking of economy. These republicans whom Mr. Flam is pleased to treat with so much contempt, he must allow, had some good, clever contrivance to keep down the taxes, which it would do us no harm to imitate. Victories were much better bargains to them than they are to us. A few laurel leaves or a sprig of oak was not quite so dear a pension.'

'But you will allow, Madam,' said Sir John, smiling, 'that a triumph was a more expensive reward than a title.'

Before she had time to answer, Mr. Flam said, 'let me tell you, Miss Sparkes, that as to triumphs, our heroes are so used to them at sea, that they would laugh at them at home. Those who obtain triumphs as often as they meet their enemies, would despise such holiday play among their friends. We don't to be sure, reward them as your ancients did. We don't banish them, nor put them to death for saving their country like your Athenians. We don't pay them with a trumpery wreath like your Romans. We Englishmen don't put our conquerors off with leaves; we give them fruits, as cheerfully bestowed as they are fairly earned. God bless them! I would reduce my table to one dish, my hall to one servant, my stable to one saddle-horse, and my kennel to one pointer, rather than to abridge the preservers of Old England of a feather.'

'Signal exploits, if nationally beneficial,' said Sir John, 'deserve substantial remuneration; and I am inclined to think that public honours are valuable, not only as rewards but incitements. They are as politic as they are just. When Miltiades and his illustrious ten thousand gained their immortal victory, would not a Blenheim erected on the plains of Marathon, have stimulated unborn soldiers, more than the little transitory columns which barely recorded the names of the victors?'

'What warrior,' said Mr. Carlton, 'will hereafter visit the future Palace of Trafalgar without reverence? A reverence, the purity of which will be in no degree impaired by contemplating such an additional motive to emulation.'

In answer to some further observations of Miss Sparkes, on the superiority of the ancient to British patriotism, Mr. Flam, whose indignation now provoked him to display his whole stock of erudition, eagerly exclaimed—'Do you call that patriotism in your favourite Athenians, to be so fond of rare shows, as not only to devote the money of the state to the play-house, but to make it capital to divert a little of it to the wants of the gallant soldiers, who were fighting their battles? I hate to hear fellows called patriots, who preferred their diversions to their country.'

Then erecting himself, as if he felt the taller for being an Englishman, he added,—'What, Madam Sparkes, would your Greeks have said to a Patriotic Fund by private contribution, of near half a million, in the midst of heavy taxes and a tedious war, voluntarily raised and cheerfully given to the orphans, widows, and mothers of their brave countrymen, who fell in their defence? Were the poor soldiers who fought under your Cimons, and your ——, I forget their names, ever so kindly remembered? Make it out that they were—shew me such a spirit among your ancients, and I'll turn republican to-morrow.

Miss Sparkes having again said something which he thought tended to exalt the ancient states at the expense of our own country, Mr. Flam indignantly replied—'Tell me, Madam, did your Athens, or your Sparta, or your Rome, ever take in seven thousand starving priests, driven from a country with which they were at war; a country they had reason to hate, of a religion they detested? Did they ever receive them I say, maintain them like gentlemen; and caress them like friends? If you can bring me one such instance, I will give up Old England, and turn Greek, or Roman, or—any thing but Frenchman.'

'I should be inclined,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to set down that noble deed to the account of our national religion, as well as of our national generosity.'

Miss Sparkes said, 'in one respect, however, Mr. Flam imitates the French whom he is abusing. He is very apt to triumph where he has gained no victory. If you hear his account of a defeat, you would take it like theirs for a con

quest.' She added, however, 'that there were illustrious men in other countries besides his own, as their successes testified. For her part, she was a citizen of the world, and honoured heroes wherever they were found, in Macedon, in Sweden, or even in France.'

'True enough,' rejoined Mr. Flam, 'the rulers of other countries have gone about and delivered kingdoms as we are doing: but there is this difference: they free them from mild masters to make them their own slaves; we neither get them for ourselves or our minions, our brothers, or cousins, our Jeromes or Josephs. *We* raise the weak, *they* pull down the prosperous. If *we* redeem kingdoms, 'tis to bestow them on their own lawful kings. If we help this nation, 'tis to recal one sovereign from banishment; if we assist that, 'tis to deliver another from captivity.'

'What a scene for Spain,' said Sir John, 'to behold in us their own national Quixotism soberly exemplified and rationally realized! The generous theory of their romantic knight-errant brought into actual practice. The fervour without the absurdity; the sound principle of justice without the extravagance of fancy! Wrongs redressed and rights restored, and upon the grandest scale! Deliverance wrought, not for imaginary princes, but for deposed and imprisoned monarchs! Injuries avenged—not the ideal injuries of ridiculous individuals, but the substantial wrongs of plundered empires!'

Sir John, who was amused with the oddities of Mr. Flam, was desirous of still provoking him to talk; much effort indeed was not required to induce him to do what he was fond of doing, whenever there was an opportunity of contradicting Miss Sparkes.

'But, Mr. Flam,' said Sir John, 'you were interrupted as you began to enumerate the inconsistencies which you said had put you out of love with the world.'

'Why, it makes me mad,' replied he, 'to hear men who make the loudest outcry about the dangers of the state, cramming their houses with French governesses, French cooks, and French valets; is not this adding flame to the fire? Then I have no patience to see people who pretend great zeal for the church, delighted that an Italian singer should have a larger revenue than the highest of our own bishops. Such patriots might have done well enough for Athenians,' added he, looking insultingly at Miss Sparkes, 'but they make miserable Englishmen. Then I hate to see fellows who pay least taxes, complaining most of the burthen—those who most lament the hardness of the times, spending money in needless extravagance, and luxury increasing in exact proportion as means diminish.

'Then I am sick of the conceit of the boys and girls. Do but observe how their vanity imposes on their understanding, and how names disguise things. My son would start if I were to desire him to go to London in the *stage coach*, but he *puts himself into the mail* with great coolness. If I were to talk to Fan about living in a *small house*, she would not give me the hearing, whereas she is quite wild to live in a *cottage*.'

'I do not quite agree with you, Mr. Flam,' said Sir John, smiling, 'as to the inconsistency of the world, I rather lament its dull uniformity. If we may rely on those living chronicles, the newspapers, all is one faultless scene of monotonous perfection—Were it otherwise, I presume, those frugal philologers would not keep a set of phrases ready cut and dried, in order to apply them universally in all cases. For instance, is not every public place from St. James to Otaheite, or the Cape, invariably *crowded with beauty and fashion*? Is not every public sermon pronounced to be excellent? Is not every civic speech, every provincial harangue *neat and appropriate*? And is not every military corps, from the veteran regiment of regulars, to the volunteer company of a month's standing, always declared to be *in the highest state of discipline*?'

Before the company went away, I observed that Mrs. Carlton gave Lucilla a significant glance, and both withdrew together.—In spite of my thorough belief of the injustice and absurdity of my suspicion, a pang darted through my heart, at the bare possibility that Lord Staunton might be the subject of this secret conference. I was perfectly assured that Miss Stanley would never accept him, while he retained his present character; but that character might be improved. She had rejected him for his principles; if these principles were changed, there was no other reasonable ground of objection. He might be reformed. Dare I own, even to myself, that I dreaded to hear of his reformation. I hated myself for the thought. I will, said I faintly, endeavour to rejoice if it be so. I felt a conflict in my mind between my principles and my passion, that distressed me not a little. My integrity had never before been so assailed.

At length they returned. I earnestly examined their countenances. Both looked cheerful, and even animated; yet it was evident from the redness of their eyes that both of them had been weeping. The company immediately took their leave; all our party, as it was a fine evening, attended them out to their carriages, except Miss Stanley, she only pressed the hand of Mrs. Carlton, smiled, and looked as if she durst not trust herself to talk to her, withdrew to the bow window from whence she could see them depart. I remained in the room.

As she was wiping her eyes to take away the redness, which was a sure way to increase it, I ventured to join her, and inquired with an interest I could not conceal, what had happened to distress her. 'These are not tears of distress,' said she, sweetly smiling. 'I am quite ashamed that I have so little self-control; but Mrs. Carlton has given me so much pleasure! I have caught the infection of her joy, though my foolish sympathy looks more like sorrow.' Surely, said I, indignantly to myself, she will not own Staunton's love to my face?

All frank and open as Miss Stanley was, I was afraid to press her. I had not courage to ask what I longed to know. Though Lord Staunton's renewed addresses might not give them so much pleasure, yet his reformation I knew would. I now looked so earnestly inquisitive at Lucilla, that she said, 'Oh he is all we could wish. He is a thoroughly converted man!

Indignation and astonishment made me speechless. Is this the modest Lucilla, said I to myself? It is all over. She loves him to distraction. As I attempted not to speak, she at length said, 'My poor friend is at last quite happy. I know you will rejoice with us. Mr. Carlton has for some time regularly read the Bible with her. He condescends to hear, and to invite her remarks, telling her that if he is the better classic, she is the better Christian, and that their assistance in the things which each understands must be reciprocal. If he is her teacher in human literature, he says, she must be his in that which is divine. He has been very earnest to get his mind imbued with scriptural knowledge.' How inexpressible was now my joy! As I was still silent she went on. 'But this is not all. Last Saturday he said to her, 'Henrietta, I have but one complaint to make of you; and it is for a fault which I always thought would be the last I should ever have to charge you with. It is selfishness.' Mrs. Carlton was a little shocked, though the tenderness of his manner mitigated her alarm, 'Henrietta,' resumed he, 'you intend to go to Heaven without your husband. I know you always retire to your dressing-room, not only for your private devotions, but to read prayers to your maids. What have your men-servants done, what has your husband done, that they should be excluded? Is it not a little selfish, my Henrietta,' added he, smiling, 'to confine your zeal to the eternal happiness of your own sex? Will you allow me and my men-servants to join you? To-morrow is Sunday; we will then, if you please, begin in the hall. You shall prepare what you would have read; and I will be your chaplain. A most unworthy one, Henrietta, I confess; but you will not only have a chaplain of your own making, but a Christian also. Yes, my angelic wife, I am a Christian upon the truest, the deepest conviction.'

"'Never, my dear Lucilla,' continued Mrs. Carlton, 'did I know what true happiness was till that moment. My husband, with all his faults, had always been remarkably sincere. Indeed his aversion to hypocrisy had made him keep back his right feelings and sentiments, till he was assured they were well established in his mind. He has for some time been regular at church, a thing, he said, too much taken up as a customary form to be remarkable, and which therefore involved not much; but family prayer adopted from conviction of its being a duty, rather pledged a man to consistent religion. Never, I hope, shall I forget the joy I felt, nor my gratitude to that Being 'from whom all holy desires proceed,' when, with all his family kneeling solemnly around him, I heard my once unhappy husband with a sober fervour begin,

"'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us.'

'He evidently struggled with his own feelings; but his manly mind carried him through it with an admirable mixture of dignity and feeling. He was so serenely cheerful the rest of the evening, that I felt he had obtained a great victory over himself, and his heart was at peace with him. Prayer with him was not a beginning form, but a consummation of his better purposes.'"

The sweet girl could not forbear weeping again, while she was giving me this interesting account. I felt as if I had never loved her till then. To see her so full of sensibility, without the slightest tincture of romance, so feeling, yet so sober-minded, enchanted me. I could now afford to wish heartily for Lord Staunton's reformation, because it was not likely to interfere with my hopes. And now the danger was over, I even endeavoured to make myself believe that I *should* have wished it in any event; so treacherous will the human heart be found by those who watch its motions. And it proceeds from not watching them, that the generality are so little acquainted with the evils which lurk within it.

Before I had time to express half what I felt to the fair narrator, the party came in. They seemed as much puzzled at the position in which they found Lucilla and myself, she wiping her eyes, and I standing by in admiration, as I had been at her mysterious interview with Mrs. Carlton. The Belfields knew not what to make of it. The mother's looks expressed astonishment and anxiety.. The father's eye demanded an explanation. All this mute eloquence passed in an instant, Miss Stanley gave them not time to inquire. She flew to her mother, and eagerly repeated the little tale which furnished matter for grateful joy and improving conversation the rest of the evening.

Mr. Stanley expressed a thorough confidence in the sincerity of Carlton. 'He had always,' continued he, 'in his worst days an abhorrence of deceit, and such a dread of people appearing better than they are, that he even commended that most absurd practice of Dean Swift, who you know used to perform family prayer in a garret, for fear any one should call in and detect him in the performance.' Carlton defended this as an honourable instance of Swift's abhorrence of ostentation in his religion. I opposed it on the more probable ground of his being ashamed of it. For allowing, what however never can be allowed, that an ordinary man might have some excuse for the dread of being sneered at, as wanting to be thought righteous overmuch; yet in a churchman, in a dignified churchman, family prayer would be expected as a customary decency, an indispensable appendage to his situation; which though it might be practised without piety, could not be omitted without disgrace, and which even a sensible infidel, considering it merely as a professional act could not say was a custom

More honoured in the breach than the observance

CHAP. XXXVIII

One evening, which Mr. Tyrrel happened to spend with us, after Mr. Stanley had performed the family devotions, Mr. Tyrrel said to him, 'Stanley, I don't much like the prayer you read

It seems, by the great stress it lays on holiness, to imply that a man has something in his own power. You did indeed mention the necessity of faith, and the power of grace; but there was too much about making the life holy, as if that were all in all. You seem to be putting us so much upon working and doing, that you leave nothing to do for the Saviour.'

'I wish,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'as I am no deep theologian, that you had started this objection before Dr. Barlow went away, for I know no man more able or more willing for serious discussion.'

'No,' replied Tyrrel, 'I see clearly by some things which he dropt in conversation, as well as by the whole tenor of his sermons, that Barlow and I should never agree. He means well, but knows little. He sees something, but feels nothing. More argument than unction. Too much reasoning, and too little religion; a little light, and no heat. He seems to me so to 'overload the ship with duties,' that it will sink by the means he takes to keep it afloat. I thank God my own eyes are opened, and I at last feel comfortable in my mind.'

'Religious comfort,' said Mr. Stanley, 'is a high attainment. Only it is incumbent on every Christian to be assured that if he is happy it is on safe grounds.'

'I have taken care of that,' replied Mr. Tyrrel. 'For some years after I had quitted my loose habits, I attended occasionally at church, but found no comfort in it, because I perceived so much was to be *done*, and so much was to be *sacrificed*. But the great doctrines of faith, as opened to me by Mr. *H—n*, have at last given me peace and liberty, and I rest myself without solicitude on the mercy so freely offered in the Gospel. No mistakes or sins of mine can ever make me forfeit the divine favour.'

'Let us hear, however,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'what the Bible says; for as that is the only rule by which we shall be judged hereafter, it may be prudent to be guided by it here. God says by the prophet, 'I will put my Spirit within you:' but he does this for some purpose; for he says, in the very next words, 'I will cause you to *walk* in my statutes.' And for fear this should not plainly enough inculcate holiness, he goes on to say, 'And ye shall *keep* my judgments, and *do* them.' Show me, if you can, a single promise made to an impenitent, unholy man.'

Tyrrel. 'Why is not the mercy of God promised to the wicked in every part of the Bible?'

Stanley. 'It is. But that is, 'if he forsake his way.'

Tyrrel. 'This fondness for works is, in my opinion, nothing else but setting aside the free grace of God.'

Stanley. 'Quite the contrary: so far from setting aside, it is the way to glorify it, for it is by that grace alone that we are enabled to perform right actions. For myself, I always find it difficult to answer persons, who, in flying to one extreme, think they cannot too much degrade the opposite. If we give faith its due prominence, the mere moralist reprobates our principles, as if we were depreciating works. If we magnify the beauty of holiness, the advocate for exclusive faith accuses us of being its enemy.'

Tyrrel. 'For my own part, I am persuaded that unqualified trust is the only ground of safety.'

Stanley. 'He who cannot lie has indeed told us so. But trust in God is humble dependence, not presumptuous security. The Bible does not say trust in the Lord and sin on, but, 'trust in the Lord, and be doing good.' We are elsewhere told that, 'God works in us to will and to do.' There is no getting over that little word *to do*. I suppose you allow the necessity of prayer.'

Tyrrel. 'Certainly I do.'

Stanley. 'But there are conditions to our prayers also, 'if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.' '

Tyrrel. 'The scriptures affirm that we must live on the promises.'

Stanley. 'They are indeed the very aliment of the Christian life. But what are the promises?'

Tyrrel. 'Free pardon and eternal life to them that are in Christ Jesus.'

Stanley. 'True. But who are they that *are* in Christ Jesus! The Apostle tells us, 'they who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.' Besides, is not holiness promised as well as pardon? 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.'

Tyrrel. 'Surely, Stanley, you abuse the grace of the Gospel, by pretending that man is saved by his own righteousness.

Stanley. 'No, no, my dear Tyrrel, it is you who abuse it, by making God's mercy set aside man's duty. Allow me to observe, that he who exalts the grace of God, with a view to indulge himself in any sin, is deceiving no one but himself; and he who trusts in Christ, with a view to spare himself the necessity of watchfulness, humility, and self-denial, that man depends upon Christ for more than he has promised.'

Tyrrel. 'Well, Mr. Stanley, it appears to me that you want to patch up a convenient accommodating religion, as if Christ were to do a little, and we were to do the rest: a sort of partnership salvation, and in which man has the largest share.'

Stanley. 'This, I fear, is indeed the dangerous creed of many worldly Christians.—No, God may be said to do all, because he gives power for all, strength for all, grace for all. But this grace is a principle, a vital energy, a life-giving spirit to quicken us, to make us abound in holiness. He does not make his grace abound, that we may securely live in sin, but that we may subdue it, renounce it, live above it.'

Tyrrel. 'When our Saviour was upon earth, there was no one quality he so uniformly commended, in those who came to be healed by him, as faith.'

Stanley. 'It is most true. But we do not meet in any of them with such a presumptuous faith, as led them to rush into diseases on purpose to show their confidence in his power of healing them, neither are we to 'continue in sin that grace may abound.'—You cannot but observe, that the faith of the persons you mention, was always accompanied with an earnest desire to get rid of their diseases. And it is worth re-

marking, that to the words 'thy faith has made thee whole,' is added '*sin no more*,' lest a worse thing come unto thee.'

Tyrrel. 'You cannot persuade me that any neglect, or oven sin of mine, can make void the covenant of God.'

Stanley. 'Nothing ean set aside the covenant of God, which is sure and steadfast.—But as for him who lives in the allowed praetiee of any sin, it is elear that he has no part nor lot in the matter. It is clear that he is not one of those whom God has taken into the eovenant. That God will keep his word is most eertain, but such a one does not appear to be the person to whom that word is addressed. God as mueh designed that you should apply the faculties, the power, and the will he has given you, to a life of holiness, as he meant when he gave you legs, hands, and eyes, that you should walk, work, and see. His graee is not intended to exelude the use of his gifts, but to perfeet, exalt, and ennoble them.'

Tyrrel. 'I can produee a multitude of texts to prove that Christ has done every thing, and of course has left nothing for me to do, but to believe on him.'

Stanley. 'Let us take tho general tenor and spirit of seripture, and neither paek single texts together, detaehed from the eonnexion in whieh they stand; nor be so unreasonable as to squeeze all the doctrines of Christianity out of every single text, whieh perhaps was only meant to ineuleate one individual principle. How eonsistently are the great leading doctrines of faith and holiness balaneed and reeoneiled in every part of the Bible! If ever I had been in danger of resting on a mere dead faith, by one of those texts on whieh you exelusivoly build, in the very next sentenee, perhaps, I am roused to active virtue, by some lively example, or absolute eom. mand. If again I am ever in danger, as you say, of sinking the ship with my proud duties, the next passage ealls me to order, by some powerful injunetion to renounce all eonfidence in my miserable defeetive virtues, and to put my whole trust in Christ. By thus assimilating the Creed with the Commandmonts, the Bible beeomes its own interpreter, and perfeet harmony is the rosult. Allow me also to remark, that this invariable rule of exhibiting the doetrines of Seripture in their due propoition, order, and relative connexion, is one of the leading exeellenees in the serviee of our Chureh. While no doctrine is neglected or undervalued, none is, disproportionately magnified, at the expense of the others. There is neither omission, undue prominenco, nor exaggeration. There is complete symmetry and eorrect proportion.

Tyrrel. 'I assert that we are freed by the Gospel from the eondemnation of the law.'

Stanley. 'But where do you find that we are free from the obligation of obeying it? For my own part I do not eombine the doctrine of grace to whieh I most cordially assent, with any doetrine whieh praetieally denies the voluntary agency of man. Nor, in my adoption of the belief of that voluntary agency, do I, in the remotest degree, presume to abridge the sovereignty of God. I adopt none of the metaphysieal subtleties, none of the abstruse nieeties of any party, nor do I imitate either in the reprobation of the other, firmly believing that heaven is peopled with the humble and the conseientious out of every class of real Christians.'

Tyrrel. 'Still I insist that if Christ has delivered me from sin, sin can do me no harm.'

Stanley. 'My dear Mr. Tyrrel, if the king of your eountry were a mighty general, and had delivered the land from some powerful enemy, would it show your sense of the obligation, or your allegianee as a subject, if you were to join the enemy he had defeated? By so doing, though the eountry might be saved, you would ruin yourself. Let us then live in confederaey with sin, the power of whieh indeed our Redeemer has broken, but both the power and guilt of whieh the individual is still at liberty to incur.'

Tyrrel. 'Stanley, I remember when you thought the Gospel was all in all.

Stanley. 'I think so still: but I am now, as I was then, for a sober eonsistent Gospel, a Christianity, whieh must evidenee itself by its fruits. The first words of the Apostle aftor his eonversion were, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' When he says, 'so run that ye may obtain,' he could never mean that we could obtain by sitting still, nor would he have talked of 'labouring *in vain*,' if he meant that we should not labour at all. We dare not persist in any thing that is wrong, or neglect any thing that is right, from an erroneous notion, that we have sueh an interest in Christ, as will exeuse us from doing the one, or persisting in the other.'

Tyrrel. 'I fancy you think that a man's salvation dopends on the number of good actions he ean muster together.'

Stanley. 'No, it is the very spirit of Christianity not to build on this or that aetual work, but sedulously to strive for that temper, and those dispositions, which are the seminal prineiple of all virtues; and where the heart struggles, and prays for the attainment of this state, though the man should be plaeed in sueh circumstanees as to be able to do little to promote the welfare of mankind, or the glory of God, in the eyes of the world; this very habitual aim and bent of the mind, with humble sorrow at its low attainments. is, in my opinion, no slight degree of obedienee.'

Tyrrel. 'But you will allow that the Scriptures affirm, that Christ is not only a sacrifiee, but a refuge, a eonsolation, a rest.'

Stanley. 'Blossed be God, he is indeed all these. But he is a consolation only to the heavy laden, a refuge to those alone who forsake sin. The rest he promises is not a rest from labour, but a rest from evil. It is a rest from the drudgery of the world, but not from the serviee of God. It is not inaetivity, but quietness of spirit; not sloth but peaee. He draws men indeed from slavery to freedom, but not a freedom to do evil, or to do nothing. He makes his service easy, but not by lowering the rule of duty, not by adapting his eommands to the eorrupt inelinations of our nature. He eommunieates his graee, gives fresh and higher motives to obedienee, and imparts peaeo and eomfort, not by any abatement in his demands, but by this infusion of his own graee, and this communication of his own Spirit.'

Tyrrel. 'You are a strange fellow. Accord-

ing to you, we can neither be saved by good works, nor without them.'

Stanley. 'Come, Mr. Tyrrel, you are nearer the truth than you intended. We cannot be saved by the merit of our good works, without setting at nought the merits and death of Christ; and we cannot be saved without them, unless we set at nought God's holiness, and make him a favourer of sin.' Now to this the doctrine of the atonement, properly understood, is most completely hostile. That this doctrine *favours* sin, is one of the false charges which worldly men bring against vital Christianity, because they do not understand the principle, nor inquire into the grounds on which it is adopted.'

Tyrrel. 'Still I think you limit the grace of God, as if people must be very good first, in order to deserve it, and then he will come and add his grace to their goodness. Whereas grace has been most conspicuous in the most notorious sinners.'

Stanley. 'I allow that the grace of God has never manifested itself more gloriously than in the conversion of notorious sinners. But it is worth remarking, that all such, with St. Paul at their head, have ever after been eminently more afraid than other men of falling again into sin; they have prayed with the greatest earnestness to be delivered from the power of it, and have continued to lament most deeply the remaining corruptions of their hearts.'

In the course of the conversation, Mr. Tyrrel said, 'he should be inclined to entertain doubts of that man's state, who could not give an accurate account of the time and the manner in which he was first awakened, and who had no sensible manifestation of the divine favour.'

'I believe,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that my notions of the evidence of being in the favour of God differ materially from yours. If a man feel in himself a hatred of all sin, without sparing his favourite corruption; if he rest for salvation on the promise of the Gospel alone; if he maintain in his mind such a sense of the nearness and immeasurable importance of eternal things, as shall enable him to use temporal things with moderation, and anticipate their end without dismay; if he delight in the worship of God, is zealous for his service, making *his* glory the end and aim of all his actions; if he labour to fulfil his allotted duties conscientiously; if he love his fellow creatures as the children of the same common father, and partakers of the same common hope; if he feel the same compassion for the immortal interests, as for the worldly distresses of the unfortunate; forgiving others, as he hopes to be forgiven; if he endeavour according to his measure and ability, to diminish the vice and misery with which the world abounds, *that* man has a solid ground of peace and hope, though he may not have those sensible evidences which afford triumph, and exultation. In the mean while, the man of a heated imagination, who boasts of mysterious communications within, is perhaps exhibiting outwardly unfavourable marks of his real state, and holding out by his low practice, discouragements unfriendly to that religion of which he professes himself a shining instance.

'The sober Christian is as fully convinced, that only He who made the heart, can new make it, as the enthusiast. He is as fully persuaded that his natural dispositions cannot be changed, nor his affections purified, but by the agency of the Divine Spirit, as the fanatic. And though he presume not to limit omnipotence to a sudden or a gradual change, yet he does not think it necessary to ascertain the day, and the hour, and the moment, contented to be assured that whereas he was once blind he now sees. If he do not presume in his own case to fix the *chronology of conversion*, he is not less certain as to its effects. If he cannot enumerate dates, and recapitulate feelings, he can and does produce such evidences of his improvement, as virtuous habits, a devout temper, an humble and charitable spirit, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' and this gives an evidence less equivocal, as existing more in the heart than on the lips, and more in the life than in the discourse. Surely if a plant be flourishing, the branches green, and the fruit fair and abundant, we may venture to pronounce these to be indications of health and vigour, though we cannot ascertain the moment when the seed was sown, or the manner in which it sprung up.'

Sir John, who had been an attentive listener, but had not yet spoken a word, now said, smiling, 'Mr. Stanley, you steer most happily between the two extremes. This exclusive cry of grace in one party of religionists, which drives the opposite side into as unreasonable a clamour against it, reminds me of the Queen of Louis Quatorze. When the Jesuits who were of the court party, made so violent an outcry against the Jansenists, for no reason but because they had more piety than themselves. Her Majesty was so fearful of being thought to favour the oppressed side, that in the excess of her party zeal, she vehemently exclaimed, 'Oh fie upon grace! fie upon grace!'"

Mr. Stanley. 'Party violence thinks it can never recede far enough from the side it opposes.'

Tyrrel. 'But how then is our religion to be known, except by our making a profession of truths, which the irreligious are either ignorant of or oppose?'

Stanley. 'There is, as I have already observed, a more infallible criterion. It is best known by the effects it produces on the heart, and on the temper. A religion, which consists in opinions only, will not advance us in our progress to heaven; it is apt to inflate the mind with the pride of disputation; and victory is so commonly the object of debate, that eternity slides out of sight. The two cardinal points of our religion, justification and sanctification, are, if I may be allowed the term, correlatives; they imply a reciprocal relation, nor do I call that state Christianity, in which either is separately and exclusively maintained. The union of these manifests the dominion of religion in the heart, by increasing its humility, by purifying its affections, by setting it above the contamination of the maxims and habits of the world, by detaching it from the vanities of time, and elevating it to a desire for the riches of eternity.'

Tyrrel. 'All the exhortations to duties with

which so many sermons abound, are only an infringement on the liberty of a Christian. A true believer knows of no duty but faith, no rule but love.'

Stanley. 'Love is indeed the fountain and principle of all practical virtue. But love itself requires some regulation to direct its exertion; some law to guide its motions; some rule to prevent its aberrations; some guard to hinder that which is vigorous from becoming eccentric. With such a regulation, such a law, such a guard, the divine ethics of the gospel have furnished us. The word of God is as much our rule, as his Spirit is our guide, or his Son our 'way.' This unerring rule alone secures Christian liberty from disorder, from danger, from irregularity, from excess. Conformity to the precepts of the Redeemer is the most infallible proof of having an interest in his death.'

We afterwards insensibly slid into other subjects, when Mr. Tyrrel, like a combatant who thought himself victorious, seemed inclined to return to the charge. The love of money having been mentioned by Sir John with extreme severity, Mr. Tyrrel seemed to consider it as a venal failing, and said that both avarice and charity might be constitutional.'

'They may be so,' said Mr. Stanley, 'but Christianity, Sir, has a constitution of its own; a superinduced constitution. A real Christian 'confers not with flesh and blood,' with his *constitution*, whether he shall give or forbear to give, when it is a clear duty, and the will of God requires it. If we believe in the principles, we must adopt the conclusions. Religion is not an unproductive theory, nor charity an unnecessary, an incidental consequence, nor a contingent left to our choice.' You are a classic, Mr. Tyrrel, and cannot have forgotten that in your mythological poets, the three Pagan graces were always knit together hand in hand; the three Christian graces are equally inseparable, and the greatest of these is charity; that grand principle of love, of which alms-giving is only one branch.'

Mr. Tyrrel endeavoured to evade the subject, and seemed to intimate that true Christianity might be known without any such evidences as Mr. Stanley thought necessary. This led the latter to insist warmly on the vast stress which every part of Scripture laid on the duty of charity. Its doctrines,' said he, 'its precepts, its promises, and its examples all inculcate it.—'the new commandment' of John—'the pure and undefiled religion' of James—'Ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' of Luke—the daily and hourly practice of Him, who not only taught to do good, but who 'went about doing it.'—'The store for a good foundation against the time to come' of Paul—nay, in the only full, solemn, and express representation of the last day, which the gospel exhibits, charity is not only brought forward as a predominant, a distinguishing feature of the righteous, but a specific recompense seems to be assigned to it, when practised on true Christian grounds. And it is not a little observable, that the only posthumous quotation from the sayings of our divine Saviour which the Scripture has recorded, is an encouragement to charity—'Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than receive.'

CHAP. XXXIX.

The next afternoon, when we were all conversing together, I asked Mr. Stanley what opinion he held on a subject which had lately been a good deal canvassed, the propriety of young ladies learning the dead languages; particularly the Latin. He was silent. Mrs. Stanley smiled. Phœbe laughed outright. Lucilla, who had nearly finished making tea, blushed excessively. Little Celia, who was sitting on my knee while I was teaching her to draw a bird, put an end to the difficulty, by looking up in my face and crying out—'Why, Sir, Lucilla reads Latin with Papa every morning.' I cast a timid eye on Miss Stanley, who, after putting the sugar into the cream pot, and the tea into the sugar basin, slid out of the room, beckoning Phœbe to follow her.

'Poor Lucilla,' said Mr. Stanley, 'I feel for her! Well, Sir,' continued he, 'you have discovered by external, what I trust would not have been found by internal evidence. Parents who are in high circumstances, yet from principle abridge their daughters of the pleasures of the dissipated part of the world, may be allowed to substitute other pleasures; and if the girl has a strong inquisitive mind, they may direct it to such pursuits as call for vigorous application, and the exercise of the mental powers.'

'How does that sweet girl manage,' said Lady Belfield, 'to be so utterly void of pretension? So much softness and so much usefulness, strip her of all the terrors of learning.'

'At first,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'I only meant to give Lucilla as much Latin as would teach her to grammatize her English, but her quickness in acquiring led me on, and I think I did right; for it is superficial knowledge that excites vanity. A learned language, which a discreet woman will never produce in company, is less likely to make her vain, than those acquirements which are always in exhibition. And after all, it is a hackneyed remark, that the best instructed girl will have less learning than a school-boy; and why should vanity operate in her case more than in his?'

'For this single reason, Sir,' said I, 'that every boy knows that which very few girls are taught. Suspect me not, however, of censuring a measure which I admire. I hope the example of your daughters will help to raise the tone of female education.'

'Softly, softly,' interrupted Mr. Stanley, 'retrench your plural number. It is only one girl out of six who has deviated from the beaten track. I do not expect many converts, to what I must rather call my practice in one instance, than my general opinion. I am so convinced of the prevailing prejudice, that the thing has never been named out of the family. If my gay neighbour Miss Rattle knew that Lucilla had learned Latin, she would instantly find out a few odd moments to add that language to her innumerable acquirements, because her mother can

afford to pay for it, and because Lady Di. Dash has never learnt it. I assure you, however,' (laughing as he spoke,) 'I never intend to smuggle my poor girl on any man, by concealing from him this unpopular attainment, any more than I would conceal any personal defect.'

'I will honestly confess, said Sir John, who had not yet spoken, 'that had I been to judge the case *a priori*, had I met Miss Stanley under the terrifying persuasion that she was a scholar, I own I should have met her with a prejudice; I should have feared she might be forward in conversation, deficient in feminine manners, and destitute of domestic talents. But having had such a fair occasion of admiring her engaging modesty, her gentle and unassuming tone in society, and above all, having heard from Lady Belfield how eminently she excels in the true science of a lady, domestic knowledge, I cannot refuse her that additional regard, which this solid acquirement, so meekly borne, deserves. Nor, on reflection, do I see why we should be so forward to instruct a woman in the language spoken at Rome in its present degraded state, in which there are comparatively few authors to improve her, and yet be afraid that she should be acquainted with that which was its vernacular tongue, in its age of glory two thousand years ago, and which abounds with writers of supreme excellence.'

I was charmed at these concessions from Sir John, and exclaimed with a transport which I could not restrain: 'In our friends, even in our common acquaintance, do we not delight to associate with those whose pursuits have been similar to our own, and who have read the same books? How dull do we find it, when civility compels us to pass even a day with an illiterate man? Shall we not then delight in the kindred acquirements of a dearer friend? Shall we not rejoice in a companion who has drawn, though less copiously, perhaps, from the same rich sources with ourselves; who can relish the beauty we quote, and trace the allusion at which we hint? I do not mean that *learning* is absolutely necessary, but a man of taste who has an ignorant wife, cannot, in her company, think his own thoughts, nor speak his own language. His thoughts he will suppress; his language he will debase, the one from hopelessness, the other from compassion.—He must be continually lowering and diluting his meaning, in order to make himself intelligible. This he will do for the woman he loves, but in doing it he will not be happy. She who cannot be entertained by his conversation, will not be convinced by his reasoning; and at length he will find out that it is less trouble to lower his own standard to hers, than to exhaust himself in the vain attempt to raise hers to his own.'

'A fine high sounding *tirade*, Charles, spoken *con amore*,' said Sir John. 'I really believe though, that one reason why women are so frivolous is that the things they are taught are not solid enough to fix the attention, exercise the intellect, and fortify the understanding. They learn little that inures to reasoning, or compels to patient meditation.'

'I consider the difficulties of a solid education,' said Mr. Stanley, 'as a sort of preliminary course, intended perhaps by Providence as a gradual preparative for the subsequent difficulties of life; as a prelude to the acquisition of that solidity and firmness of character which actual trials are hereafter to confirm. Though I would not make instruction unnecessarily harsh and rugged, yet I would not wish to increase its facilities to such a degree as to weaken that robustness of mind which it should be its object to promote, in order to render mental discipline subservient to moral.'

'How have you managed with your other girls, Stanley,' said Sir John, 'for though you vindicate general knowledge, you profess not to wish for general learning in the sex.'

'Far from it,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'I am a gardener you know, and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent, or at least propensity; for parents are too apt to mistake inclination for genius. This propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract, instead of encouraging the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction. Lucilla having a strong bent to whatever relates to intellectual taste, I have read over with her the most unexceptionable parts of a few of the best Roman classics. She began at nine years old, for I have remarked that it is not learning much, but learning late which makes pedants.

'Phœbe, who has a superabundance of vivacity, I have in some measure tamed, by not only making her a complete mistress of arithmetic, but by giving her a tincture of mathematics. Nothing puts such a bridle on the fancy as demonstration. A habit of computing steadies the mind, and subdues the soarings of imagination. It sobers the vagaries of trope and figure, substitutes truth for metaphor, and exactness for amplification. This girl, who if she had been fed on poetry and works of imagination, might have become a Miss Sparkes, now rather gives herself the airs of a calculator and of a grave computist. Though, as in the case of the cat in the fable, who was metamorphosed into a lady, nature will break out as soon as the scratching of a mouse is heard; and all Phœbe's philosophy can scarcely keep her in order, if any work of fancy comes in her way.

'To soften the horrors of her fate, however, I allowed her to read a few of the best things in her favourite class. When I read to her the more delicate parts of Gulliver's Travels, with which she was enchanted, she affected to be angry at the voyage to Laputa, because it ridicules philosophical science. And in Brobdignag, she said the proportions were not correct. I must however explain to you, that the use which I made of these dry studies with Phœbe, was precisely the same which the ingenious Mr. Cheshire makes of his steel machines for defective shapes, to straighten a crooked tendency or strengthen a weak one. Having employed these means to set her mind upright, and to cure a wrong bias, as that skilful gentleman discards his apparatus as soon as the patient becomes straight, so have I discontinued these pursuits, for I never meant to make a mathematical lady.

Jane has a fine ear and a pretty voice, and will sing and play well enough for any girl who is not to make music her profession. One or two of the others sing agreeably.

The little one, who brought the last nosegay, has a strong turn for natural history, and we all of us generally botanize a little of an evening, which gives a fresh interest to our walks. She will soon draw plants and flowers pretty accurately. Louisa also has some taste in designing, and takes tolerable sketches from nature. These we encourage because they are solitary pleasures, and want no witnesses. They all are too eager to impart somewhat of what they know to your little favourite Celia, who is in danger of picking up a little of every thing, the sure way to excel in nothing.

'Thus each girl is furnished with some one source of independent amusement. But what would become of them, or rather what would become of their mother and me, if every one of them was a scholar, a mathematician, a singer, a performer, a botanist, a painter? Did we attempt to force all these acquirements and a dozen more on every girl, all her *time* would be occupied about things which will be of no value to her in *eternity*. I need not tell you that we are carefully communicating to every one of them that general knowledge which should be common to all gentlewomen.

'In unrolling the vast volume of ancient and modern history, I ground on it some of my most useful instructions, and point out how the truth of Scripture is illustrated by the crimes and corruptions which history records, and that the same pride, covetousness, ambition, turbulence, and deceit, bring misery on empires, and destroy the peace of families. To history, geography, and chronology are such indispensable appendages, that it would be superfluous to insist on their usefulness. As to astronomy, while 'the heavens declare the glory of God,' it seems a kind of impiety not to give young people some insight into it.

'I hope,' said Sir John, 'that you do not exclude the modern languages from your plan.' 'As to French,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'with that thorough inconsistency which is common to man, the demand for it seems to have risen in exact proportion as it ought to have sunk.* I would not however rob my children of a language in which, though there are more books to be avoided, there are more that deserve to be read, than in all the foreign languages put together.'

'If you prohibit Italian,' said Sir John laughing, 'I will serve you as Cowper advised the boys and girls to serve Johnson for depreciating Henry and Emma; I will join the musical and poetical ladies in tearing you to pieces, as the Thracian damsels did Orpheus, and send your head with his

Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.

'You remember me, my dear Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'a warm admirer of the exquisite beauties of Italian poetry. But a father feels, or rather judges differently from the mere man of taste, and as a father, I cannot help regretting, that what is commonly put into the hands of our daughters, is so amatory, that it has a tendency to soften those minds which rather want to be invigorated.

'There are few things I more deprecate for girls than a poetical education, the evils of which I saw sadly exemplified in a young friend of Mrs. Stanley. She had beauty and talents. Her parents, enchanted with both, left her entirely to her own guidance. She yielded herself up to the uncontrolled rovings of a vagrant fancy. When a child, she wrote verses, which were shown in her presence to every guest, their flattery completed her intoxication. She afterwards translated Italian sonnets, and composed elegies of which love was the only theme.—These she was encouraged by her mother to recite herself, in all companies, with a pathos and sensibility which delighted her parents, but alarmed her more prudent friends.

'She grew up with the confirmed opinion that the two great and sole concerns of human life were love and poetry. She considered them as inseparably connected, and she resolved in her own instance never to violate so indispensable a union. The object of her affection was unhappily chosen, and the effects of her attachment were such as might have been expected from a connection formed on so slight a foundation. In the perfections with which she invested her lover, she gave the reins to her imagination, when she thought she was only consulting her heart.—She picked out and put together all the fine qualities of all the heroes, of all the poets she had ever read, and into this finished creature, her fancy transformed her admirer.

'Love and poetry commonly influence the two sexes in a very disproportionate degree. With men, each of them is only one passion among many. Love has various and powerful competitors in hearts divided between ambition, business, and pleasure. Poetry is only one amusement in minds, distracted by a thousand tumultuous pursuits; whereas in girls of ardent tempers, whose feelings are not curbed by restraint, and regulated by religion, love is considered as the great business of their earthly existence. It is cherished, not as 'the cordial drop,' but as the whole contents of the cup; the remainder is considered only as froth or dregs. The unhappy victim not only submits to the destructive dominion of a despotic passion, but glories in it. So at least did this ill-starred girl

'The sober duties of a family had early been transferred to her sisters, as far beneath the attention of so fine a genius; while she abandoned herself to studies, which kept her imagination in a fever, and to a passion which those studies continually fed and inflamed. Both together completed her delirium. She was ardent, generous, and sincere; but violent, imprudent, and vain to excess. She set the opinion of the world at complete defiance, and was not only totally destitute of judgment and discretion herself, but despised them in others. Her lover and her muse were to her instead of the whole world.

'After having for some years exchanged son

* See an ingenious little treatise entitled Latium Redivivum, or the modern use of the Latin language, and the prevalence of the French.

nets under the names of Laura and Petrarch, and elegies under those of Sappho and Phaon; the lover, to whom all this had been mere sport, the gratification of vanity, and the recreation of an idle hour, grew weary.

Younger and fairer he another saw.

He drew off. Her verses were left unanswered, her reproaches unpitied. Laura wept, and Sappho raved in vain.

'The poor girl, to whom all this visionary romance had been a serious occupation, which had swallowed up cares and duties, now realized the woes she had so often admired and described. Her upbraidings only served to alienate still more the heart of her deserter; and her despair, which he had the cruelty to treat as fictitious, was to him a subject of mirth and ridicule. Her letters were exposed, her expostulatory verses read at clubs and taverns, and the unhappy Sappho was toasted in derision.

'All her ideal refinements now degenerated into practical improprieties. The public avowal of her passion drew on her from the world charges which she had not merited.—Her reputation was wounded, her health declined, her peace was destroyed. She experienced the dishonours of guilt without its turpitude, and in the bloom of life fell, the melancholy victim to a mistaken education, and an undisciplined mind.'

Mrs. Stanley dropped a silent tear to the memory of her unhappy friend, the energies of whose mind she said would, had they been rightly directed, have formed a fine character.

'But none of the things of which I have been speaking,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'are the great and primary objects of instruction. The inculcation of fortitude, prudence, humility, temperance, self-denial—this is education. These are things which we endeavour to promote far more than arts or languages. These are tempers, the habit of which should be laid in early, and followed up constantly, as there is no day in life which will not call them into exercise; and how can that be practised which has never been acquired!

'Perseverance, meekness, and industry,' continued he, 'are the qualities we most carefully cherish and commend. For poor Laura's sake I make it a point never to extol any indications of genius. Genius has pleasure enough in its own high aspirings.—Nor am I indeed over much delighted with a great blossom of talents. I agree with good Bishop Hall, that it is better to thin the blossoms, that the rest may thrive; and that in encouraging too many propensities, one faculty may not starve another.'

Lady Belfield expressed herself grateful for the hints Mr. Stanley had thrown out, which could not but be of importance to her who had so large a family. After some further questions from her he proceeded.

'I have partly explained to you, my dear Madam, why, though I would not have every woman learn every thing, yet why I would give every girl, in a certain station of life, some one amusing accomplishment. There is here and there a strong mind, which requires a more substantial nourishment than the common education of girls affords. To such and to such only, would I furnish the quiet resource of a dead language, as a solid aliment which may fill the mind without inflating it.

'But that no acquirements may inflate it let me add, there is but one sure corrective. Against learning, against talents of any kind, nothing can steady the head, unless you fortify the heart with real Christianity. In raising the moral edifice, we must sink deep in proportion as we build high. We must widen the foundation if we extend the superstructure. Religion alone can counteract the aspirings of genius, can regulate the pride of talents.

'And let such women as are disposed to be vain of their comparatively petty attainments, look up with admiration to those two contemporary shining examples, the venerated Elizabeth Carter, and the blooming Elizabeth Smith. I knew them both, and to know was to revere them. In *them*, let our young ladies contemplate profound and various learning chastened by true Christian humility. In *them*, let them venerate acquirements which would have been distinguished in a university, meekly softened, and beautifully shaded by the gentle exertion of every domestic virtue, the unaffected exercise of every feminine employment.

CHAP. XL.

Ever since Mr. Tyrrel had been last with us, I had observed an unusual seriousness in the countenance of Sir John Belfield, though accompanied with his natural complaceney. His mind seemed intent on something he wished to communicate. The first time we were both alone in the library with Mr. Stanley, Sir John said, 'Stanley, the conversations we have lately had, and especially the last with Tyrrel, in which you bore so considerable a part, have furnished me with agreeable matter for reflection. I hope the pleasure will not be quite destitute of profit.'

'My dear Sir John,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'in conversation with Mr. Tyrrel, I labour under a disadvantage common to every man, who when he is called to defend some important principle which he thinks attacked, or undervalued, is brought into danger of being suspected to undervalue others, which, if they in their turn were assailed, he would defend with equal zeal. When points of the last importance are slighted as insignificant, in order exclusively to magnify one darling opinion, I am driven to appear as if I opposed that important tenet, which, if I may so speak, seems pitted against the others. Those who do not previously know my principles, might almost suspect me of being an opposer of that prime doctrine, which I really consider as the leading principle of Christianity.'

'Allow me to say,' returned Sir John 'that my surprise has been equal to my satisfaction. Those very doctrines which you maintained, I had been assured, were the very tenets you rejected. Many of our acquaintance, who do not come near enough to judge, or who would not be competent to judge if they did, ascribe the strictness of your practice to some unfounded peculiarities of opinion, and suspect that the doctrines of Tyrrel, though somewhat modified,

a little more rationally conceived, and more ably expressed, are the doctrines held by you, and by every man who rises above the ordinary standard of what the world calls religious men. And what is a little absurd and inconsequent, they ascribe to these supposed dangerous doctrines, his abstinence, from the diversions, and his disapprobation of the manners and maxims of the world. *Your* opinions, however, I always suspected could not be very pernicious, the effects of which, from the whole tenor of your life, I knew to be so salutary.'

'My dear Belfield,' said Mr. Stanley 'men of the world are guilty of a striking inconsistency in the charge they bring against religious men. They accuse them at once of maintaining doctrines which lead to licentiousness, and of overstrictness in their practice. One of them may be true: but both cannot be so.'

'I now find upon full proof,' replied Sir John, that there is nothing in your sentiments but what a man of sense might approve; nothing but what, if he be really a man of sense, he will without scruple adopt. May I be enabled more fully, more practically to adopt them! You shall point out to me such a course of reading, as may not only clear up my remaining difficulties, but what is infinitely more momentous than the solution of any abstract question, may help to awaken me to a more deep and lively sense of my own individual interest in this great concern.'

Mr. Stanley's benevolent countenance was lighted up with more than its wonted animation. He did not attempt to conceal the deep satisfaction with which his heart was penetrated. He modestly referred his friend to Doctor Barlow, as a far more able casuist, though not a more cordial friend. For my own part, I felt my heart expand towards Sir John, with new sympathies and an enlarged affection. I felt nobler motives of attachment, an attachment which I hoped would be perpetuated beyond the narrow bounds of this perishable world.

'My dear Sir John,' said Mr. Stanley, 'it is among the daily but comparatively petty trials of every man, who is deeply in earnest to secure his immortal interests, to be classed with low and wild enthusiasts, whom his judgment condemns, with hypocrites against whom his principles revolt, and with men, pious and conscientious I am most willing to allow, but differing widely from his own views; with others who evince a want of charity in some points, and a want of judgment in most. To be identified, I say, with men so different from yourself, because you hold in common some great truths, which all real Christians have held in all ages, and because you agree with them in avoiding the blameable excesses of dissipation, is among the sacrifices of reputation which a man must be contented to make, who is earnest in the great object of a Christian's pursuit. I trust, however, that, through divine grace, I shall never renounce my integrity for the praise of men, who have so little consistency, that though they pretend their quarrel is with your faith, yet who would not care how extravagant your belief was, if your practice assimilated with their own. I trust, on the other hand, that I shall always maintain my candour towards those with whom we are unfairly involved; men, religious though somewhat eccentric; devout, though injudicious; and sincere, though mistaken; but who, with all their errors, against which I protest, and with all their indiscretion, which I lament, and with their ill-judged because irregular zeal, which I blame, I shall ever think—always excepting hypocrites and false pretenders—are better men, and in a safer state than their revelers.'

'I have often suspected,' said I, 'that under the plausible pretence of objecting to your creed, men conceal their quarrel with the commandments.'

'My dear Stanley,' said Sir John, 'but for this visit I might have continued in the common error, that there was but one description of religious professors. That a fanatical spirit, and a fierce adoption of one or two particular doctrines, to the exclusion of all the rest, with a total indifference to morality, and a sovereign contempt of prudence, made up the character against which I confess, I entertained a serious disgust. Still, however, I loved *you* too well, and had too high an opinion of your understanding, to suspect that you would ever be drawn into those practical errors, to which I had been told, your theory inevitably led. Yet I own I had an aversion to this dreaded enthusiasm which drove me into the opposite extreme.

'How many men have I known,' replied Mr. Stanley, smiling, 'who, from their dread of a burning zeal, have taken refuge in a freezing indifference?' As to the two extremes of heat and cold, neither of them is the true climate of Christianity; yet the fear of each drives men of opposite complexions into the other, instead of fixing them in the temperate zone which lies between them, and which is the region of genuine piety.

'The truth is, Sir John, *your* society considers earnestness in religion as the fever of a distempered understanding, while in inferior concerns they admire it as the indication of a powerful mind. Is zeal in politics accounted the mark of a vulgar intellect? Did they consider the unquenchable ardour of Pitt, did they regard the lofty enthusiasm of Fox, as evidences of a feeble or a disordered mind? Yet I will venture to assert, that ardour in religion is as much more noble than ardour in politics as the prize for which it contends is more exalted. It is beyond all comparison superior to the highest human interest, the truth and justice of which after all may possibly be mistaken, and the objects of which must infallibly have an end.'

Dr. Barlow came in, and seeing us earnestly engaged, desired that he might not interrupt the conversation. Sir John in a few words informed him of what had passed, and with a most graceful humility spoke of his own share in it, and confessed how much he had been carried away by the stream of popular prejudice, respecting men who had courage to make a consistent profession of Christianity. 'I now,' added he, 'begin to think with Addison, that singularity in religion is heroic bravery, 'because it only leaves the species by soaring above it.'

After some observations from Dr. Barlow, much in point, he went to remark that the difficulties of a clergyman were much increased

by the altered manners of the age. 'The tone of religious writing,' said he, 'but especially the tone of religious conversation, is much lowered. The language of a Christian minister in discussing Christian topics will naturally be consonant to that of Scripture. The Scripture speaks of a man being *renewed in the spirit of his mind*, of his being *sanctified by the grace of God*. Now how much circumlocution is necessary for us in conversing with a man of the world, to convey the sense without adopting the expression; and what pains must we take to make our meaning intelligible without giving disgust, and to be useful without causing irritation!'

Sir John. 'But, my good Doctor, is it not a little puritanical, to make use of such solemn expressions in company?'

Dr. Barlow. 'Sir, it is worse than puritanical, it is hypocritical, where the principle itself does not exist; and even where it does, it is highly inexpedient to introduce such phrases into general company at all. But I am speaking of serious private conversation, when, if a minister is really in earnest, there is nothing absurd in his prudent use of Scripture expressions. One great difficulty, and which obstructs the usefulness of a clergyman, in conversation with many persons of the higher class, who would be sorry not to be thought religious, is, that they keep up so little acquaintance with the Bible, that from their ignorance of its venerable phraseology, they are offended at the introduction of a text, not because it is Scripture; for that they maintain a kind of general reverence; but, because, from not reading it, they do not know that it *is* Scripture.

'I once lent a person of rank and talents an admirable sermon, written by one of our first divines. Though deeply pious, it was composed with uncommon spirit and elegance, and I thought it did not contain one phrase which could offend the most fastidious critic. When he returned it, he assured me that he liked it much on the whole, and should have approved it altogether, but for one methodistical expression. To my utter astonishment he pointed to the exceptionable passage, 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' The chapter and verse not being mentioned, he never suspected it was a quotation from the Bible.'

'This is one among many reasons,' said Mr. Stanley, 'why I so strenuously insist that young persons should read the Scriptures, unaltered, unmodernized, unmutilated, unabridged. If parents do not make a point of this, the peculiarities of sacred language will become really obsolete to the next generation.'

In answer to some further remarks of Sir John, Mr. Stanley said, smiling, 'I have sometimes amused myself with making a collection of certain things, which are now considered and held up by a pretty large class of men as the infallible symptoms of methodism. Those which at present occur to my recollection are the following. Going to church in the afternoon, maintaining family prayer, not travelling, or giving great dinners or other entertainments on Sundays, rejoicing in the abolition of the slave trade, promoting the religious instruction of the poor at home, subscribing to the Bible Society, and contributing to establish Christianity abroad. These, though the man attend no eccentric clergyman, hold no one enthusiastic doctrine, associate with no fanatic, is sober in his conversation, consistent in his practice, correct in his whole deportment, will infallibly fix on him the charge of methodism. Any *one* of these will excite suspicion, but all united will not fail absolutely to stigmatize him. The most devoted attachment to the establishment will avail him nothing, if not accompanied with a fiery intolerance towards all who differ. Without intolerance, his charity is construed into unsoundness, and his candour into disaffection. He is accused of assimilating with the principles of every weak brother whom, though his judgment compels him to blame, his candour forbids him to calumniate. Saint and hypocrite are now, in the scoffer's lexicon, become convertible terms: the last being always implied where the first is sneeringly used.'

'It has often appeared to me,' said I, 'that the glory of a tried Christian somewhat resembles that of a Roman victor, in whose solemn procession, among the odes of gratulation, a mixture of abuse and railing made part of the triumph.'

'Happily,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'a religious man knows the worst he is likely to suffer. In the present established state of things he is not called, as in the first ages of Christianity, to be made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. But he must submit to be assailed by three different descriptions of persons. From the first, he must be contented to have principles imputed to him which he abhors, motives which he disdains, and ends which he deprecates. He must submit to have the energies of his well-regulated piety confounded with the follies of the fanatic, and his temperate zeal blended with the ravings of the insane. He must submit to be involved in the absurdities of the extravagant, in the duplicity of the designing, and in the mischiefs of the dangerous; to be reckoned among the disturbers of that church which he would defend with his blood, and of that government which he is perhaps supporting in every possible direction. Every means is devised to shake his credit. From such determined assailants no prudence can protect his character, no private integrity can defend it, no public service rescue it.'

'I have often wondered,' said Sir John, 'at the success of attacks which seemed to have nothing but the badness of the cause to recommend them. But the assailant, whose object is to make good men ridiculous, well knows that he has secured to himself a large patronage in the hearts of all the envious, the malignant, and irreligious, who, like other levellers, find it more easy to establish the equality of mankind by abusing the lofty, than by elevating the low.'

'In my short experience of life,' said I, when Sir John had done speaking, 'I have often observed it as a hardship, that a man must only submit to be condemned for doctrines he disowns, but also for consequences which others may draw from the doctrines he maintains,

though he himself both practically and speculatively disavow any such consequences.'

'There is another class of enemies,' resumed Mr. Stanley. 'To do them justice, it is not so much the individual Christian, as Christianity itself, which *they* hope to discredit; *that* Christianity which would not only restrain the conduct, but would humble the heart; which strips them of the pride of philosophy, and the arrogant plea of merit; which would save, but will not flatter them. In this enlightened period, however, for men who would preserve any character, it would be too gross to attack religion itself, and they find they can wound her more deeply and more creditably through the sides of her professors.'

'I have observed,' said I, 'that the uncandid censurer always picks out the worst man of a class, and then confidently produces him as being a fair specimen of it.'

'From our own thoughtless, but less uncharitable acquaintance, the gay and the busy,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'we have to sustain a gentler warfare. A little reproach, a good deal of ridicule, a little suspicion of our designs, and not a little compassion for our gloomy habits of life, and implied contempt of our judgment, some friendly hints that we carry things too far, an intimation that being righteous over much in the practice has a tendency to produce derangement in the faculties. These are the petty but daily trials of every man who is seriously in earnest; and petty indeed they are to him whose prospects are well grounded, and whose hope is full of immortality.'

'This hostility, which a real Christian is sure to experience,' said I, 'is not without its uses. It quickens his vigilance over his own heart, and enlarges his charity towards others, whom reproach perhaps may as unjustly stigmatize. It teaches him to be on his guard, lest he should really deserve the censure he incurs; and what I presume is of no small importance, it teaches him to sit loose to human opinion; it weakens his excessive tenderness for reputation, makes him more anxious to deserve, and less solicitous to obtain it.'

'It were well,' said Dr Barlow, 'if the evil ended here. The established Christian will evince himself to be such by not shrinking from the attack. But the misfortune is, that the dread of this attack keeps back well disposed but vacillating characters. They are intimidated at the idea of partaking the censure, though they know it to be false.

'When they hear the reputation of men of piety assailed, they assume an indifference which they are far from feeling. They listen to reproaches cast on characters which they inwardly revere, without daring to vindicate them. They hear the most attached subjects accused of disaffection, and the most sober-minded churchmen of innovation, without venturing to repel the charge, lest they should be suspected of leaning to the party. They are afraid fully to avow that their own principles are the same, lest they should be involved in the same calumny. To efface this suspicion, they affect a coldness which they do not feel, and treat with levity what they inwardly venerate. Very young men, from this criminal timidity, are led to risk their eternal happiness through the dread of a laugh. Though they know that they have not only religion but reason on their side, yet it requires a hardy virtue to repel a sneer, and an intrepid principle to confront a sarcasm. Thus their own mind loses its firmness, religion loses their support, the world loses the benefit which their example would afford, and they themselves become liable to the awful charge which is denounced against him who is ashamed of his Christian profession.'

'Men of the world,' said Sir John, 'are extremely jealous of whatever may be thought *particular;* they are frightened at every thing that has not the sanction of public opinion, and the stamp of public applause. They are impatient of the slightest suspicion of censure in what may be supposed to affect the credit of their judgment, though often indifferent enough as to any blame that may attach to their conduct. They have been accustomed to consider strict religion as a thing which militates against good taste, and to connect the idea of something unclassical and inelegant, something awkward and unpopular, something uncouth and ill-bred, with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; doctrines which, though there is no harm in believing, they think there can be no good in avowing.

'It is a little hard,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that men of piety, who are allowed to possess good sense on all other occasions, and whose judgment is respected in all the ordinary concerns of life, should not have a little credit given to them in matters of religion, but that they should be at once transformed into idiots or madmen, in that very point which affords the noblest exercise to the human faculties.'

'A Christian then,' said I, 'if human applause be his idol, is of all men most miserable. He forfeits his reputation every way. He is accused by the men of the world of going too far; by the enthusiast of not going far enough. While it is one of the best evidences of his being right, that he is rejected by one party for excess, and by the other for deficiency.'

'What then is to be done?' said Dr. Barlow. 'Must a discreet and pious man give up a principle because it has been disfigured by the fanatic, or abused by the hypocrite, or denied by the sceptic, or reprobated by the formalist, or ridiculed by the men of the world? He should rather support it with an earnestness proportioned to its value; he should rescue it from the injuries it has sustained from its enemies; and the discredit brought on it by its imprudent friends. He should redeem it from the enthusiasm which misconceives, and from the ignorance or malignity which misrepresents it. If the learned and the judicious are silent in proportion as the illiterate and the vulgar are obtrusive and loquacious, the most important truths will be abandoned by those who are best able to unfold, and to defend them, while they will be embraced exclusively by those who misunderstand, degrade and debase them. Because the unlettered are absurd, must the able cease to be religious? If there is to be an abandonment of every Christian principle, because it has been unfairly, unskilfully, or inadequately treated, there would, one

by one, be an abandonment of every doctrine of the New Testament.'

'I felt myself bound,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to act on this principle in our late conversation with Mr. Tyrrel. I would not refuse to assert with him the doctrines of grace, but I endeavoured to let him see that I had adopted them in a scriptural sense. I would not try to convince him that he was wrong, by disowning a truth because he abused it. I would cordially reject all the bad use he makes of any opinion, without rejecting the opinion itself, if the Bible will bear me out in the belief of it. But I would scrupulously reject all the other opinions which he connects with it, and with which I am persuaded it has no connection.

'The nominal Christian,' said Dr. Barlow, 'who insists that religion resides in the understanding only, may contend that love to God, gratitude to our Redeemer, and sorrow for our offences, are enthusiastic extravagances; and effectually repress by ridicule and sarcasm, those feelings which the devout heart recognizes, and which Scripture sanctions. On the other hand, those very feelings are inflamed, exaggerated, distorted, and misrepresented, as including the whole of religion, by the intemperate enthusiast, who thinks reason has nothing to do in the business; but who, trusting to tests not warranted by Scripture, is governed by fancies, feelings, and visions of his own.

'Between these pernicious extremes, what course is the other Christian to pursue? Must he discard from his heart all pious affections because the fanatic abuses them, and the fastidious deny their existence? This would be like insisting, that because one man happens to be sick of a dead palsy, and another of a phrenzy fever, there is therefore in the human constitution no such temperate medium as sound health.'

CHAP. XLI.

Since the conversation which had accidentally led to the discovery of Miss Stanley's acquirements, I could not forbear surveying the perfect arrangements of the family, and the completely elegant but not luxurious table, with more than ordinary interest. I felt no small delight in reflecting that all this order and propriety were produced without the smallest deduction from the mental cultivation.

I could not refrain from mentioning this to Mrs. Stanley. She was not displeased with my observation, though she cautiously avoided saying any thing which might be construed into a wish to set off her daughter. As she seemed surprised at my knowledge of the large share her Lucilla had in the direction of the family concerns, I could not, in the imprudence of my satisfaction, conceal the conversation I had with my old friend Mrs. Comfit.

After this avowal she felt that any reserve on this point would look like affectation, a littleness which would have been unworthy of her character. 'I am frequently blamed by my friends,' said she, 'for taking some of the load from my own shoulders, and laying it on hers. 'Poor thing, she is too young!' is the constant cry of fashionable mothers. My general answer is, you do not think your daughters of the same age too young to be married, though you know marriage must bring with it these, and still heavier cares. Surely then Lucilla is not too young to be initiated in that useful knowledge which will hereafter become no inconsiderable part of her duty. The acquisition would be really burthensome then, if it were not lightened by preparatory practice now. I have, I trust, convinced my daughters, that though there is no great merit in possessing this sort of knowledge, yet to be destitute of it is highly discreditable.'

'In several houses where I had visited, I had observed the forwardness of the parents, the mother especially, to make a display of the daughter's merits,—'so dutiful! so notable! such an excellent nurse!' The girl was then called out to sing or to play, and was thus, by that *inconsistency* which my good mother deprecated, kept in the full exhibition of those very talents which are most likely to interfere with nursing and notableness. But since I had been on my present visit, I had never once heard my friends extol their Lucilla, or bring forward any of her excellences. I had however observed their eyes fill with delight, which they could not suppress, when her merits were the subject of the praise of others.

I took notice of this difference of conduct to Mrs. Stanley. 'I have often,' said she, 'been so much hurt at the indelicacy to which you allude, that I very early resolved to avoid it. If the girl in question does not deserve the commendation, it is not only disingenuous but dishonest. If she does, it is a coarse and not very honourable stratagem for getting her off. But if the daughter be indeed all that a mother's partial fondness believes,' added she, her eyes filling with tears of tenderness, 'how can she be in such haste to deprive herself of the solace of her life? How can she by gross acts wound that delicacy in her daughter, which, to a man of refinement, would be one of her chief attractions, and which will be lowered in his esteem, by the suspicion that she may concur in the indiscretion of the mother.

'As to Lucilla,' added she, 'Mr. Stanley and I sometimes say to each other, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols!' O my dear young friend! it is in vain to dissemble her unaffected worth and sweetness. She is not only our delightful companion, but our confidential friend. We encourage her to give us her opinion on matters of business, as well as of taste; and having reflected as well as read a good deal, she is not destitute of materials on which to exercise her reasoning powers. We have never repressed her natural vivacity, because we never saw it, like Phœbe's, in danger of carrying her off from the straight line.'

I thanked Mrs. Stanley for her affectionate frankness, with a warmth which showed the cordial interest I took in her, who was the object of it; company coming in interrupted our interesting tete-a-tete.

After tea, I observed the party in the saloon to be thinner than usual. Sir John and Lady

Belfield having withdrawn to write letters; and that individual having quitted the room, whose presence would have reconciled me to the absence of all the rest, I stole out to take a solitary walk. At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the park-gate, on a little common, I observed, for the first time, the smallest and neatest cottage I ever beheld. There was a flourishing young orchard behind it, and a little court full of flowers in front. But I was particularly attracted by a beautiful rose tree in full blossom which grew against the house, and almost covered the clean white walls. As I knew this sort of rose was a particular favourite of Lucilla's I opened the low wicket which led into the little court, and looked about for some living creature, of whom I might have begged the flowers. But seeing no one, I ventured to gather a bunch of the roses, and the door being open, walked into the house, in order to acknowledge my theft, and make my compensation. In vain I looked round the little neat kitchen! no one appeared.

I was just going out, when the sound of a soft female voice over head arrested my attention. Impelled by a curiosity which, considering the rank of the inhabitants, I did not feel it necessary to resist, I softly stole up the narrow stairs, cautiously stooping as I ascended, the lowness of the ceiling not allowing me to walk upright. I stood still at the door of a little chamber, which was left half open to admit the air. I gently put my head through. What were my emotions when I saw Lucilla Stanley kneeling by the side of a little clean bed, a large old Bible spread open on the bed before her, out of which she was reading one of the penitential Psalms to a pale emaciated female figure, who lifted up her failing eyes, and clasped her feeble hands in solemn attention!

Before two little bars, which served for a grate, knelt Phœbe, with one hand stirring some broth, which she had brought from home, and with the other fanning with her straw bonnet the dying embers, in order to make the broth boil; yet seemingly attentive to her sister's reading. Her dishevelled hair, the deep flush which the fire and her labour of love gave her naturally animated countenance, formed a fine contrast to the angelic tranquillity and calm devotion which sat on the face of Lucilla. Her voice was inexpressibly sweet and penetrating, while faith, hope and charity seemed to beam from her uplifted eyes. On account of the closeness of the room, she had thrown off her hat, cloak, and gloves, and laid them on the bed; and her fine hair, which escaped from its confinement, shaded that side of her face which was next the door, and prevented her seeing me.

I scarcely dared to breathe lest I should interrupt such a scene. It was a subject not unworthy of Raphael. She next began to read the forty-first Psalm, with the meek yet solemn emphasis of devout feeling. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.' Neither the poor woman nor myself could hold out any longer. She was overcome by her gratitude, and I by my admiration, and we both at the same moment involuntarily exclaimed, Amen! I sprang forward with a motion which I could no longer control. Lucilla saw me, started up in confusion,

> and blush'd
> Celestial rosy red.

Then eagerly endeavouring to conceal the Bible, by drawing her hat over it, 'Phœbe,' said she, with all the composure she could assume, 'is the broth ready?' Phœbe, with her usual gaiety, called out to me to come and assist, which I did, but so unskilfully that she chid me for my awkwardness.

It was an interesting sight to see one of these blooming sisters lift the dying woman in her bed, and support her with her arm, while the other fed her, her own weak hand being unequal to the task. At that moment how little did the splendors and vanities of life appear in my eyes! and how ready was I to exclaim, with Wolsey,

> Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.

When they had finished their pious office, I inquired if the poor woman had no attendant. Phœbe who was generally the chief speaker, said, 'she has a good daughter, who is out at work by day, but takes care of her mother at night; but she is never left alone, for she has a little grand-daughter who attends her in the mean time; but as she is obliged to go once a day to the Grove to fetch provisions, we generally contrive to send her while we are here, that Dame Alice may never be left alone.'

While we were talking, I heard a little weary step, painfully climbing up the stairs, and looking round, expecting to see the grand-daughter; but it was little Kate Stanley, with a lap full of dry sticks, which she had been collecting for the poor woman's fire. The sharp points of the sticks had forced their way in many places through the white muslin frock, part of which, together with her bonnet, she had left in the hedge, which she had been robbing. At this loss she expressed not much concern, but lamented not a little that sticks were so scarce; that she feared the broth had been spoiled, from her being so long in picking them, but *indeed* she could not help it. I was pleased with these under allotments, these low degrees in the scale of charity.

I had gently laid my roses on the hat of Miss Stanley, as it lay on the Bible, and before we left the room, as I drew near the good old Dame to slip a couple of guineas into her hand, I had the pleasure of seeing Lucilla, who thought herself unobserved, retire to the little window, and fasten the roses into the crown of her hat like a garland. When the grand-daughter returned loaded with the daily bounty from the Grove, we took our leave, followed by the prayers and blessings of the good woman.

As we passed by the rose-tree, the orchard, and the court, Phœbe said to me, 'An't you glad that poor people can have such pleasures?' I told her it doubled my gratification to witness the enjoyment, and to trace the hand which conferred it; for she had owned it was *their* work. 'We have always,' replied Phœbe, 'a

particular satisfaction in observing a neat little flower garden about a cottage, because it holds out a comfortable indication that the inhabitants are free from absolute want, before they think of these little embellishments.'

'It looks also,' said Miss Stanley, 'as if the woman, instead of spending her few leisure moments in gadding abroad, employed them in adorning her little habitation, in order to make it more attractive to her husband. And we know more than one instance in this village in which the man has been led to give up the public house, by the innocent ambition of improving on her labours.'

I asked her what first inspired her with such fondness for gardening, and how she had acquired so much skill and taste in this elegant art? She blushed and said, 'she was afraid I should think her romantic, if she were to confess that she had caught both the taste and the passion, as far as she possessed either, from an early and intimate acquaintance with the Paradise Lost, of which she considered the beautiful descriptions of the scenery and plantations as the best precepts for landscape gardening. Milton,' she said, 'both excited the taste and supplied the rules. He taught the art and inspired the love of it.'

From the gardens of Paradise the transition to its heroine was easy and natural. On my asking her opinion of this portrait, as drawn by Milton, she replied, 'that she considered Eve, in her state of innocence, as the most beautiful model of the delicacy, propriety, grace and elegance of the female character which any poet ever exhibited. Even after her fall,' added she, 'there is something wonderfully touching in her remorse, and affecting in her contrition.'

'We are probably,' replied I, 'more deeply affected with the beautifully contrite expressions of repentance in our first parents, from being so deeply involved in the consequences of the offence which occasioned it.'

'And yet,' replied she, 'I am a little affronted with the poet, that while, with a noble justness, he represents Adam's grief at his expulsion, as chiefly arising from his being banished from the presence of his Maker, the sorrows of Eve seem too much to arise from being banished from her flowers. The grief, though never grief was so beautifully eloquent, is rather too exquisite, her substantial ground for lamentation considered.'

Seeing me going to speak, she stopped me with a smile, saying, 'I see by your looks that you are going, with Mr. Addison, to vindicate the poet, and to call this a just appropriation of the sentiment to the sex; but surely the disproportion in the feeling here is rather too violent, though I own the loss of her flowers *might* have aggravated any common privation. There is, however, no female character in the whole compass of poetry, in which I have ever taken so lively an interest, and no poem that ever took such powerful possession of my mind.'

If any thing had been wanting to my full assurance of the sympathy of our tastes and feelings, this would have completed my conviction. It struck me as the Virgilian lots formerly struck the superstitious. Our mutual admiration of the Paradise Lost, and of its heroine, seemed to bring us nearer together than we had yet been. Her remarks, which I gradually drew from her in the course of our walk, on the construction of the fable, the richness of the imagery, the elevation of the language, the sublimity and just appropriation of the sentiments, the artful structure of the verse and the variety of the characters, convinced me that she had imbibed her taste from the purest sources. It was easy to trace her knowledge of the best authors, though she quoted none.

'This,' said I exultingly to myself, 'is the true learning for a lady; a knowledge that is rather detected than displayed, that is felt in its effects on her mind and conversation; that is seen, not by her citing learned names, or adducing long quotations, but in the general result, by the delicacy of her taste, and the correctness of her sentiments.'

In our way home I made a merit with little Kate, not only by rescuing her hat from the hedge, but by making a little provision of wood under it, of larger sticks than she could gather, which she joyfully promised to assist the granddaughter in carrying to the cottage.

I ventured, with as much diffidence as if I had been soliciting a pension for myself, to entreat that I might be permitted to undertake the putting forward Dame Alice's little girl in the world, as soon as she shall be released from her attendance on her grandmother. My proposal was graciously accepted, on condition that it met with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's approbation.

When we joined the party at supper, it was delightful to observe that the habits of religious charity were so interwoven with the texture of these girls minds, that the evening which had been so interesting to me, was to them only a common evening, marked with nothing particular. It never occurred to them to allude to it; and once or twice when I was tempted to mention it, my imprudence was repressed by a look of the most significant gravity from Lucilla.

I was comforted, however, by observing that my roses were transferred from the hat to the hair. This did not escape the penetrating eye of Phœbe, who archly said, 'I wonder, Lucilla, what particular charm there is in Dame Alice's faded roses. I offered you some fresh ones since we came home. I never knew you prefer withered flowers before.' Lucilla made no answer, but cast down her timid eyes, and out-blushed the roses on her head.

CHAP. XLII.

After breakfast next morning the company all dropped off one after another, except Lady Belfield, Miss Stanley, and myself. We had been so busily engaged in looking over the plan of a conservatory, which Sir John proposed to build at Beechwood, his estate in Surry, that we hardly missed them.

Little Celia, whom I call the Rosebud, had climbed up my knees, a favourite station with her, and was begging me to tell her another pretty story. I had before told her so many, that I had exhausted both my memory and my

imagination. Lucilla was smiling at my impoverished invention, when Lady Belfield was called out of the room. Her fair friend rose mechanically to follow her. Her ladyship begged her not to stir, but to employ the five minutes of her absence in carefully criticising the plan she held in her hand, saying, she would bring back another which Sir John had by him; and that Lucilla, who is considered as the last appeal in all matters of this nature, should decide to which the preference should be given, before the architect went to work.

In a moment I forgot my tale and my rosebud, and the conservatory, and every thing but Lucilla, whom I was beginning to address, when little Celia, pulling my coat, said, 'Oh, Charles,' (for so I teach all the little ones to call me,) 'Mrs. Comfit tells me very bad news. She says that your new curricle is come down, and that you are going to run away. Oh! don't go; I can't part with you,' said the little charmer, throwing her arms round my neck.

'Will you go with me, Celia?' said I, kissing her rosy cheek. 'There will be room enough in the curricle.' 'Oh, I should like to go,' said she, 'if Lucilla may go with us. Do, dear Charles, do let Lucilla go to the Priory. She will be very good; won t you, Lucilla?' I ventured to look at Miss Stanley, who tried to laugh without succeeding, and blushed without trying at it.

On my making no reply, for fear of adding to her confusion, Celia looked up piteously in my face, and cried: 'and so you won't let Lucilla go home with you? I am sure the curricle will hold us all nicely; for I am very little, and Lucilla is not very big.'—'Will *you* persuade her, Celia?' said I,—'O,' said she, 'she does not want persuading; she is willing enough, and I will run to papa and mamma and ask their leave, and then Lucilla will go and be glad: won't you Lucilla?'

So saying, she sprung out of my arms, and ran out of the room; Lucilla would have followed and prevented her. I respectfully detained her. How could I neglect such an opportunity? Such an opening as the sweet prattler had given me it was impossible to overlook. The impulse was too powerful to be resisted; I gently replaced her on her seat, and in language which, if it did any justice to my feelings, was the most ardent, tender, and respectful, poured out my whole heart. I believe my words were incoherent; I am sure they were sincere.

She was evidently distressed. Her emotion prevented her replying. But it was the emotion of surprise, not of resentment. Her confusion bore no symptom of displeasure. Blushing and hesitating, she at last said—'My father, Sir—my mother.' Here her voice failed her. I recollected with joy, that on the application of Lord Staunton, she had allowed of no such reference, nay she had forbidden it.

'I take your reference joyfully,' said I, 'only tell me that if I am so happy as to obtain their consent, you will not withhold yours.' She ventured to raise her timid eyes to mine, and her modest but expressive look encouraged me almost as much as any words could have done.

At that moment the door opened, and in came Sir John with the other drawing of the conservatory in his hand. After having examined us both with his keen, critical eye; 'Well, Miss Stanley,' said he, with a look and tone which had more meaning than she could well stand, 'here is the other drawing. As you look as if you had been *calmly* examining the first, you will now give me your *cool*, *deliberate* opinion of the merits of both.' He had the cruelty to lay so much stress on the words calm and deliberate, and to pronounce them in so arch a manner, and so ironical a tone, as clearly showed, he read in her countenance that no epithets could possibly have been so ill applied.

Lady Belfield came in immediately after. 'Well, Caroline,' said he, with a significant glance, 'Miss Stanley has deeply considered the subject since you went; I never saw her look more interested about any thing. I don't think she is dissatisfied on the whole. General approbation is all she now expresses. She will have time to spy out faults hereafter: she sees none at present. All is beauty, grace, and proportion.'

As if this was not enough, in ran Celia quite out of breath—'O, Lucilla,' cried she, 'Papa and Mamma won't let you go with Charles, though I told them you begged and prayed to go.' Lucilla, the pink of whose cheeks was become crimson, said angrily; 'how Celia! what do you mean?' 'Oh, no,' replied the child, 'I mean to say that *I* begged and prayed, and I thought you looked as if you would like to go—though Charles did not ask you, and so I told Papa.'

This was too much. The Belfields laughed outright; but Lady Belfield had the charity to take Lucilla's hand, saying, 'come into my dressing-room, my dear, and let us settle this conservatory business. This prattling child will never let us get on.' Miss Stanley followed, her face glowing with impatience. Celia, whom I detained, called after her—'Papa only said there was not room in the curricle for three, but if 'tis only a little way I am sure we could sit—could not we, Lucilla?' Lucilla was now happily out of hearing.

Though I was hurt that her delicacy had suffered so much, yet I own I hugged the little innocent author of this confusion with additional fondness. Sir John's raillery, now that Lucilla could be no longer pained by it, was cordially received, or rather I was inattentive to every object but the one of which my heart was full. To be heard, to be accepted, though tacitly, to be referred to parents who I knew had no will but hers,

> Was such a sacred and homefelt delight,
> Such sober certainty of waking bliss
> As I ne'er felt till now.

During the remainder of the day I found no means of speaking to Mr. Stanley. Always frank and cheerful, he neither avoided nor sought me, but the arrival of company prevented our being thrown together. Lucilla appeared at dinner as usual: a little graver and more silent, but always unaffected, natural and delicate. Sir John whispered to me, that she had intreated her mother to keep Celia out of the way, til'

this curricle business was a little got out of her head.

CHAP. XLIII.

The next morning, as soon as I thought Mr. Stanley had retreated to his library, I followed him thither. He was busy writing letters. I apologized for my intrusion. He laid his papers aside, and invited me to sit by him.

'You are too good, Sir,' said I, 'to receive with so much kindness a culprit who appears before you ingenuously to acknowledge the infraction of a treaty into which he had the honour of entering with you. I fear that a few days are wanting of my prescribed month. I had resolved to obey you with the most religious scrupulousness; but a circumstance trifling in itself, has led almost irresistibly to a declaration, which in obedience to your commands I had resolved to postpone. But though it is somewhat premature, I hope, however, you will not condemn my precipitancy. I have ventured to tell your charming daughter how necessary she is to my happiness. She does not reject me. She refers me to her father.'

'You have your peace to make with my daughter, I can tell you, Sir,' said Mr. Stanley, looking gravely, 'I fear you have mortally offended her.' I was dreadfully alarmed. 'You know not how you afflict me, Sir,' said I; 'how have I offended Miss Stanley?' 'Not Miss Stanley,' said he, smiling, 'but Miss Celia Stanley,' who extremely resents having been banished from the drawing-room yesterday evening.'

'If Celia's displeasure is all I have to fear, Sir, I am most fortunate. Oh, Sir, my happiness, the peace of my future life is in your hands. But first tell me you forgive the violation of my promise.'

'I am willing to believe, Charles,' replied he, 'that you kept the spirit of your engagement, though you broke it in the letter; and for an unpremeditated breach of an obligation of this nature, we must not, I believe, be too rigorous. Your conduct since your declaration to me, has confirmed the affection which your character had before excited. You were probably surprised and hurt at my cold reception of your proposal; a proposal which gave me a deeper satisfaction than I can express. Yet I was no dissembler in suppressing the pleasure I felt at an address so every way desirable. My dear Charles, I know a little of human nature. I know how susceptible the youthful heart is of impressions. I know how apt these impressions are to be obliterated; a new face, a more advantageous connexion.' 'Hold, Sir,' said I, indignantly interrupting him, 'you cannot think so meanly of me. You cannot rate the son of your friend so low.'

'I am very far indeed, replied he, 'from rating you low. I know you abhor mercenary considerations; but I know also that you are a young man, lively, ardent, impressible. I know the rapid effect which leisure, retirement, rural scenes, daily opportunities of seeing a young woman not ugly, of conversing with a young woman not disagreeable, may produce on the heart, or rather on the imagination. I was aware that seeing no other, conversing with no other, none at least that, to speak honestly, I should consider as a fair competitor, hardly left you an unprejudiced judge of the state of your own heart. I was not sure but that this sort of easy commerce might produce a feeling of complacency which might be mistaken for love. I could not consent that mere accident, mere leisure, the mere circumstance of being thrown together should irrevocably entangle either of you. I was desirous of affording you time to see, to know, and to judge. I would not take advantage of your first emotions. I would not take advantage of your friendship for me. I would not take advantage of your feeling ardently, till I had given you time to judge temperately, and examine fairly.'

I assured him I was equally at a loss to express my gratitude of his kindness, and my veneration of his wisdom; and thanked him in terms of affectionate energy.

'My regard for you,' said he, 'is not of yesterday. I have taken a warm interest in your character and happiness almost ever since you have been in being; and in a way more intimate and personal than you can suspect.'

So saying he arose, unlocked the drawer of a cabinet which stood behind him, and took out a large packet of letters. He then resumed his seat, and holding out the direction on the covers, asked me if I was acquainted with the handwriting. A tear involuntarily startled into my eye as I exclaimed—'it is the well known hand of my beloved father.'

'Listen to me attentively,' resumed he. 'You are not ignorant that never were two men more firmly attached by all the ties which ever cemented a Christian friendship, than your lamented father and myself. Our early youth was spent in the same studies, the same pleasures, the same society. 'We took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God as friends.' He condescendingly overlooked my being five or six years younger than himself. After his marriage with your excellent mother, the current of life carried us different ways, but without causing any abatement in the warmth of our attachment.

'I continued to spend one month every year with him at the Priory, till I myself married. You were then not more than three or four years old; and your engaging manners, and sweet temper, laid the foundation of an affection which had not been diminished by time, and the reports of your progress. Sedentary habits on the part of your father, and a rapidly increasing family on mine, kept us stationary at the two extremities of the kingdom. I settled at the Grove, and both as husband and father have been happiest of the happy.

'As soon as Lucilla was born, your father and I, simultaneously, formed a wish that it might be possible to perpetuate our friendship by the future union of our children.'

When Mr. Stanley uttered these words, my heart beat so fast, and the agitation of my whole frame was so visible, that he paused for a moment; but perceiving that I was all ear, and that I made a silent motion for him to proceed, he went on.

'This was a favourite project with us. We pursued it however with the moderation of men who had a settled sense of the uncertainty of all human things, of human life itself; and with a strong conviction of the probability that our project might never be realized.

'Without too much indulging the illusions of hope, we agreed that there could be no harm in educating our children for each other; in inspiring them with corresponding tastes, similar inclinations, and especially with an exact conformity in their religious views. We never indulged the presumptuous thought of counteracting providential dispensations, of conquering difficulties which time might prove to be insuperable, and above all, we determined never to be so weak, or so unjust, as to think of compelling their affections. We had both studied the human heart long enough to know that it is a perverse and wayward thing. We were convinced that it would not be dictated in a matter which involved its dearest interests; we knew that it liked to pick out its own happiness in its own way.'

As Mr. Stanley proceeded, my heart melted with grateful love for a father who, in making such a provision for my happiness, had generously left my choice so free. But while my conscience seemed to reproach me, as if I had not deserved such tenderness, I rejoiced that my memory had no specific charge to bring against it.

'For all these reasons,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'we mutually agreed to bury our wishes in our own bosoms; to commit the event to Him by whom all events are governed; never to name you to each other but in a general way; to excite no factitious liking, to elicit no artificial passion, and to kindle neither impatience, curiosity, nor interest. Nothing more than a friendly family regard was ever manifested, and the names of Charles and Lucilla were never mentioned together.

'In this you have found your advantage. Had my daughter been accustomed to hear you spoken of with any particularity; had she been conscious that any important consequences might have attached to your visit, you would have lost the pleasure of seeing her in her native simplicity of character. Undesigning and artless, I trust she would have been under any circumstance, but to have been unreserved and open would have been scarcely possible; nor might you, my dear Charles, with your strong sense of filial piety, have been able exactly to discriminate how much of your attachment was choice, how much was duty. The awkwardness of restraint would have diminished the pleasure of intercourse to both.

'Knowing that the childish brother and sister sort of intimacy was not the most promising mode for the development of your mutual sentiments, we agreed that you should not meet till within a year or two of the period when it would be proper that the union, if ever, might take place.

'We were neither of us of an age or character to indulge very romantic ideas of the doctrine of sympathies. Still we saw no reason for excluding such a possibility. If we succeeded, we knew that we were training two beings in a conformity of Christian principles, which, if they did not at once attract affection, would not fail to ensure it, should inferior motives first influence your mutual liking. And if it failed, we should each have educated a Christian, who would be likely to carry piety and virtue into two other families. Much good would attend our success, and no possible evil could attend our failure.

'I could show you, I believe, near a hundred letters on each side, of which you were the unconscious subject. Your father, in his last illness, returned all mine, to prevent a premature discovery, knowing how soon his papers would fall into your hands. If it will give you pleasure, you may peruse a correspondence, of which, for almost twenty years, you were the little hero. In reading my letters you will make yourself master of the character of Lucilla. You will read the history of her mind; you will mark the unfolding of her faculties, and the progress of her education. In those of your father you will not be sorry to trace back your own steps.'

Here Mr. Stanley making a pause, I bowed my grateful acceptance of his obliging offer. I was afraid to speak, I was almost afraid to breathe, lest I should lose a word of a communication so interesting.

'You now see,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'why you were sent to Edinburgh. Cambridge and Oxford were too near London, and of course too near Hampshire, to have maintained the necessary separation. As soon as you left the University, your father proposed accompanying you on a visit to the Grove. Like fond parents, we had prepared each other to expect to see a being just such a one as each would have wished for the companion of his child.

'This was to be merely a visit of experiment. You were both too young to marry. But we were impatient to place you both in a post of observation; to see the result of a meeting; to mark what sympathy there would be between two minds formed with a view to each other.

'But vain were all the projects of man. Oh! blindness to the future! You doubtless remember, that just as every thing was prepared for your journey southwards, your dear father was seized of the lingering illness of which he died. Till almost the last, he was able to write me in his intervals of ease, short letters on the favourite topic. I remember with what joy his heart dilated, when he told me of your positive refusal to leave him, on his pressing you to pursue the plan already settled, and to make your visit to London and the Grove without him. I will read you the passage from his letter.'—He read as follows:

'In vain have I endeavoured to drive this dear son for a short time from me. He asked, with the indignant feeling of affronted filial piety, if I could propose to him any compensation for his absence from my sick couch? 'I make no sacrifice of duty,' said he, 'in preferring you. If I make any sacrifice, it is to pleasure.'

Seeing my eyes overflow with grateful tenderness, Mr. Stanley said, 'if I can find his last letter I will shew it you.' Then looking over

the pacquet,—'here it is,' said he, putting it into my hands with visible emotion. Neither of us had strength of voice to be able to read it aloud. It was written at several times.

"*Priory, Wednesday, March*, 18, 1807.

'Stanley—I feel that I am dying. Death is awful, my dear friend, but it is neither surprising nor terrible. I have been too long accustomed steadily to contemplate it at a distance, to start from it now it is near.

'As a man I have feared death. As a Christian, I trust, I have overcome this fear. Why should I dread that, which mere reason taught me is not an extinction of my being, and which revelation has convinced me will be an improvement of it? An improvement, O how inconceivable!

'For several years I have habituated myself every day to reflect for some moments on the vanity of life, the certainty of death, the awfulness of judgment, and the duration of eternity.

'The separation from my excellent wife is a trial from which I should utterly shrink, were I not sustained by the Christian hope. When we married, we knew that we were not immortal. I have endeavoured to familiarize to her and to myself the inevitable separation, by constantly keeping up in the minds of both the idea that one of us *must* be the survivor. I have endeavoured to make that idea supportable by the conviction that the survivorship will be short—the re-union certain—speedy—eternal. *O præclarum diem!** &c. &c. How gloriously does Christianity exalt the rapture by ennobling the objects, of this sublime apostrophe!'

Friday, the 20th.

'As to the union of my son with Lucilla, you and I, my friend, have long learned from an authority higher than that classical one, of which we have frequently admired the expression, and lamented the application, that long views, and remote hopes, and distant expectations, become not so short-sighted, so short-lived a creature as man,† I trust, however, that our plans have been carried on with a complete conviction of this brevity; with an entire acquiescence in the will of the great Arbiter of life and death. I have told Charles, it is my wish that he should visit you soon after my death. I durst not command it—for this incomparable youth, who has sacrificed so much to his father, will find that he has a mother worthy of still greater sacrifices. As soon as he can prevail on himself to leave her, you will see him. May he and your Lucilla behold each other with the eyes, with which, each of us views his own child! If they see each other with indifference, never let them know our wishes. It would perplex and hamper those to whom we wish perfect freedom of thought and action. If they conceive a mutual attachment, reveal our project. In such minds, it will strengthen that attachment.—The approbation of a living and the desire of a deceased parent will sanctify their union.

'I must break off through weakness.'

'*Monday*, 23.

'I resume my pen, which I thought I had held for the last time. May God bless and direct our children! Infinite wisdom permits me not to see their union. Indeed my interest in all earthly things weakens. Even my solicitude for this event is somewhat diminished. The most important circumstance, if it have not God for its object, now seems comparatively little. The longest life, with all its concerns, shrinks to a point in the sight of a dying man whose eye is filled by eternity. Eternity! Oh, my friend, Eternity is a depth which no geometry can measure, no arithmetic calculate, no imagination conceive, no rhetoric describe. The eye of a dying Christian seems gifted to penetrate depths hid from the wisdom of philosophy. It looks athwart the dark valley without dismay, cheered by the bright scene beyond it. It looks with a kind of chastised impatience to that land where happiness will be only holiness perfected. There all the promises of the gospel will be accomplished. There afflicted virtue will rejoice at its past trials, and acknowledge their subservience to its present bliss. There the secret self-denials of the righteous shall be recognized and rewarded—and all the hopes of the Christian shall have their complete consummation.'

Saturday, 28th.

'My weakness increases—I have written this at many intervals. My body faints, but in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Oh, Stanley! if pain is trying, if death is awful to him, who knows in whom he has trusted; how is pain endured, how is death encountered by those who have no such support?'

Tuesday, the 31st.

'I am better to-day—If I experience little of that rapture which some require, as the sign of their acceptance, I yet have a good hope through grace. Nay there are moments when I rejoice with joy unspeakable. I would not produce this joy as any certain criterion of my safety, because, from the nature of my disease, there are also moments when my spirits sink, and this might equally furnish arguments against my state, to those who decide by frames and feelings. I think my faith as sound, my pardon as sure, when these privileges are withdrawn, as when I enjoy them. No depression of spirits can make my evidences less solid, though it may render the review of them less delightful.'

Friday, 3d April.

'Stanley! my departure is at hand. My eternal redemption draweth nigh. My hope is full of immortality. This is my comfort—not that my sins are few or small, but that they are, I humbly trust, pardoned, through him who loved me, and gave himself for me. Faithful is he that has promised, and his promises are not too great to be made good—for Omniscience is my promiser, and I have Omnipotence itself for my security.—Adieu!

* See this whole beautiful passage in Cicero de Senectute.

† Horace, in speaking of the brevity and uncertainty of life, seldom fails to produce it as an incentive to sensual indulgence. See particularly the fourth and eleventh Odes of the first book.

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On the cover was written, in Mr. Stanley's hand —he died three days after!

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It is impossible to describe the mingled and conflicting emotions of my soul, while I perused this letter. Gratitude that I had possessed such a father—sorrow that I had lost him—transport in anticipating an event which had been his earnest wish for almost twenty years—regret that he was not permitted to witness it—devout joy that he was in a state so superior to even *my* sense of happiness—a strong feeling of the uncertainty and brevity of *all* happiness—a solemn resolution that I would never act unworthy of such a father—a fervent prayer that I might be enabled to keep that resolution:—all these emotions so agitated and divided my whole mind as to render me unfit for any society, even for that of Lucilla. I withdrew, gratefully pressing Mr. Stanley's hand; he kindly returned the pressure, but neither of us attempted to speak.

He silently put my father's packet into my hands. I shut myself into my apartment, and read for three hours, letters for which I hope to be the better in time and in eternity. I found in them a treasure of religious wisdom, excellent maxims of human prudence, a thorough acquaintance with life and manners, a keen insight into human nature in the abstract, and a nice discrimination of individual characters; admirable documents for general education, the application of those documents to my particular turn of character, and diversified methods for improving it.—The pure delight to which I looked forward in reading these letters with Lucilla, soon became my predominant feeling.

I returned to the company with a sense of felicity, which the above feelings and reflections had composed into a soothing tranquillity. My joy was sobered without being abated. I received the cordial congratulations of my friends. Mrs. Stanley behaved to me with increased affection, she presented me to her daughter, with whom I afterwards passed two hours. This interview left me nothing to desire, but that my gratitude to the Almighty Dispenser of happiness might bear in some little proportion to his blessings.

As I was passing through the hall, after dinner, I spied little Celia peeping out of the door of the children's apartment, in hope of seeing me pass. She flew to me, and begged I would take her into the company. As I knew the interdict was taken off, I carried her into the saloon where they were sitting. She ran into Lucilla's arms and said, in a voice which she meant for a whisper, but loud enough to be heard by the whole company, 'Do, dear Lucilla, forgive me, I will never say another word about the curricle, and you shan't go to the Priory since you don't like it.' Lucilla found means to silence her, by showing her the pictures in the 'Peacock at Home;' and without looking up to observe the general smile, contrived to attract the sweet child's attention to this beautiful little poem, in spite of Sir John, who did his utmost to widen the mischief.

CHAP. XLIV.

The next day in the afternoon Dr. Barlow called on us. By the uncommon seriousness of his countenance I saw something was the matter. 'You will be shocked,' said he, 'to hear that Mr. Tyrrel is dying, if not actually dead. He was the night before last, seized with a paralytic stroke. He lay a long time without sense or motion; a delirium followed. In a short interval of reason he sent earnestly imploring to see me. Seldom have I witnessed so distressing a scene.

'As I entered the room he fixed his glassy eyes full upon me, quite unconscious who I was, and groaned out in an inward hollow voice—'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries are come upon you.' I asked how he did:—he replied still from St. James—'How? why my gold and silver are cankered, the rust of them shall witness against me; they eat up my flesh as it were fire.'

'I was astonished,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'to see so exact a memmory coupled with so wild an imagination. 'Be composed, Sir,' said I, seeing he began to recollect me, 'this deep contrition is a favourable symptom.' 'Dr. Barlow,' replied he, grasping my hand with a vehemence which corresponded with his look, 'have you never heard of riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt? Restitution! Doctor, restitution!—and it must be immediate, or it will be too late.' I was now deeply alarmed. 'Surely, Sir,' said I, 'you are not unhappily to adopt St. James's next words—'forgive me;—but you cannot surely have 'defrauded.'' 'O no, no,' cried he, 'I have been what the world calls honest, but not what the Judge of quick and dead will call so. The restitution I must make is not to the rich, for any thing I have *taken* from them, but to the poor, for what I have *kept* from them. Hardness of heart would have been but a common sin in a common man; but I have been a professor, Doctor, I will not say a hypocrite, for I deceived myself as much as others. But oh! how hollow has my profession been!'

'Here seeing him ready to faint,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'I imposed silence on him, till he had taken a cordial. This revived him, and he went on.

'"I was miserable in my early course of profligacy. I was disappointed in my subsequent schemes of ambition. I expected more from the world than it had to give. But I continued to love it with all its disappointments. Under whatever new shape it presented its temptations, it was still my idol. I had always loved money; but other passions more turbulent had been hitherto predominant. These I at length renounce. Covetousness now became my reigning sin. Still it was to the broken cistern that I cleaved. Still it was on the broken reed that I leaned. Still I was unhappy, I was at a loss whither to turn for comfort. Of religion I scarcely knew the first principles.

'"In this state I met with a plausible, but ill-informed man. He had zeal, and a sort of popular eloquence; but he wanted knowledge, and argument, and soundness. I was, however struck with his earnestness, and with the im

portance of some truths which, though common to others, were new to me. But his scheme was hollow and imperfect, and his leading principles subversive of all morality."'

'Here Mr. Tyrrel paused. I entreated him to spare himself; but after a few deep groans he proceeded.

'"Whether his opinions had made *himself* immoral I never inquired. It is certain they were calculated to make his hearers so. Instead of lowering my spiritual disease, by prescribing repentance and humility, he inflamed it by cordials. All was high—all was animating—all was safe! On no better ground than my avowed discontent, he landed me at once in a security so much the more fatal, as it laid asleep all apprehension. He mistook my uneasiness for a complete change. My talking of sin was made a substitute for renouncing it. Proud of a rich man for a convert, he led me to mistake conviction for conversion. I was buoyed up with an unfounded confidence. I adopted a religion which promised pardon without repentance, happiness without obedience, and heaven without holiness. I had found a short road to peace. I never inquired if it were a safe one."'

'The poor man now fell back, unable to speak for some minutes. Then rallying again, he resumed, in a still more broken voice.

'"Here I stop short. My religion had made no change in my heart, it therefore made none in my life. I read good books, but they were low and fanatical in their language, and antinomian in their principle. But my religious ignorance was so deplorable, that their novelty caught strong hold of me."'

'I now desired him,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'not to exhaust himself farther. I prayed with him. He was struck with awe at the holy energy in the office for the sick, which was quite new to him. He owned he had not suspected the church to be so evangelical. This is no uncommon error. Hot-headed and superficial men, when they are once alarmed, are rather caught by phrases than sentiments, by terms than principles. It is this ignorance of the doctrines of the Bible and of the church in which men of the world unhappily live, that makes it so difficult for us to address them under sickness and affliction. We have no common ground on which to stand; no intelligible medium through which to communicate with them. It is having both a language and a science to learn at once.'

In the morning Dr. Barlow again visited Mr. Tyrrel. He found him still in great perturbation of mind. Feeling himself quite sensible he had begun to make his will. He had made large bequests to several charities. Dr. Barlow highly approved of this; but reminded him, that though he himself would never recommend charity as a commutation or a bribe; yet some immediate acts of bounty, while there was a possibility of his recovery, would be a better earnest of his repentance, than the bequeathing his whole estate when it could be of no further use to himself. He was all acquiescence.

He desired to see Mr. Stanley. He recommended to him his nephew, over whose conduct Mr. Stanley promised to have an eye. He made him and Dr. Barlow joint executors. He offered to leave them half his fortune. With their usual disinterestedness they positively refused to accept it, and suggested to him a better mode of bestowing it.

He lifted up his hands and eyes, saying, 'This is indeed Christianity; pure and undefiled religion! If it be not faith, it is its fruits. If it be not the procuring cause of salvation it is one evidence of a safe state. O, Mr. Stanley, our last conversation has sunk deep into my heart. You had begun to pull the veil from my eyes; but nothing tears the whole mask off, like the hand of death, like impending judgment. How little have I considered eternity! Judgment was not in all my thoughts—I had got rid of the terrors of responsibility! O, Doctor Barlow, is there any hope for me?'

'Sir,' replied the Doctor, 'your sin is not greater because you feel it; so far from it, your danger diminishes in proportion as it is discerned. Your condition is not worse, but better, because you are become sensible of your sins and wants. I judge far more favourably of your state now, than when you thought so well of it. Your sense of the evil of your own heart is the best proof of your sincerity; your repentance towards God is the best evidence of your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'Doctor, it is too late,' replied the sick man, 'How can I shew that my repentance is sincere? In this miserable condition how can I glorify God?'

'Sir,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'you must lay anew the whole foundation of your faith. That Saviour whom you had unhappily adopted as a substitute for virtue, must be received as a propitiation for sin. If you recover, you must devote yourself, spirit, soul, and body to his service. You must adorn his gospel by your conduct; you must plead his cause in your conversation; you must recommend his doctrines by your humility; you must dedicate every talent God has given you to his glory. If he continue to visit you with sickness, this will call new and more difficult Christian graces into exercise. If by this severe affliction you lose all ability to do God actual service, you may perhaps glorify him more effectually by casting yourself entirely on him for support, by patient suffering for his sake who suffered every thing for yours. You will have an additional call for trusting in the divine promises; an additional occasion for imitating the divine example; a stronger motive for saying practically, the cup which my Father has given me shall I not drink it.'

'O, Doctor,' said the unhappy man, 'my remorse arises not merely from my having neglected this or that moral duty, this or that act of charity, but from the melancholy evidence which that neglect affords that my religion was not sincere.'

'I repeat, Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'that your false security and unfounded hope were more alarming than your present distress of mind. Examine your own heart, fear not to probe it to the bottom; it will be a salutary smart. As you are able, I will put you into a course of reading the Scriptures, with a view to promote self-examination. Try yourself by the strait rule they hold out, pray fervently that the Al-

mighty may assist you by his Spirit, and earnestly endeavour to suffer as well as to do his whole will.'

Dr. Barlow says he thinks there is now as little prospect of his perfect recovery, as of his immediate dissolution; but as far as one human creature can judge of the state of another, he believes the visitation will be salutary.

CHAP. XLV.

As we were setting at supper, after Dr. Barlow had left us, Lady Belfield, turning to me, said, 'she had had a governess proposed to her from a quarter I should little expect to hear.' She then produced a letter, informing her that Mr. Fentham was lately found dead in his bed of an apoplexy. That he had died insolvent; and that his large income ceasing with his life, his family were plunged into the utmost distress. That Mrs. Fentham experienced the most mortifying neglect from her numerous and noble friends, who now, that she could no longer amuse them with balls, concerts, and suppers, revenged themselves by wondering what she could ever mean by giving them at all, and declaring what a bore it had always been to them to go to her parties. They now insisted that people ought to confine themselves to their own station, and live within their income, though they themselves had lifted her above her station, and had led her to exceed her income.

'The poor woman,' continued Lady Belfield, 'is in extreme distress. Her magnificently furnished house will go but a very little way towards satisfying her creditors. That house, whose clamorous knocker used to keep the neighbourhood awake, is already reduced to utter stillness. The splendid apartments, brilliant with lustres and wax-lights, and crowded with company, are become a frightful solitude, terrifying to those to whom solitude has not one consolation or resource to offer. Poor Mrs. Fentham is more wounded by this total desertion of those whom she so sumptuously entertained, and so obsequiously flattered, than by her actual wants.'

'It is,' said Sir John, 'a fine exemplification of the friendships of the world,

Confederacies in vice, or leagues in pleasure.

'Lady Denham, when applied to,' resumed Lady Belfield, 'said, that she was extremely sorry for them; but as she thought extravagance the greatest of all faults, it would look like an encouragement to imprudence if she did any thing for them. Their extravagance, however, had never been objected to by her, till the fountain which supplied it was stopped: and she had for years made no scruple of winning money almost nightly from the woman whose distresses she now refused to relieve. Lady Denham farther assigned the misery into which the elopement of her darling child with Signior Squallini had brought her, as an additional reason for withholding her kindness from Mrs. Fentham.'

'It is a reason,' said I, interrupting Lady Belfield, 'which, in a right-turned mind, would have a directly contrary operation. When domestic calamities overtake ourselves, is it not the precise moment for holding out a hand to the wretched? for diminishing the misery abroad which at home may be irretrievable?

'Lady Bab Lawless, to whom Mrs. Fentham applied for assistance, coolly advised her to send her daughters to service, saying, 'that she knew of no acquirement they had which would be of any use to them, except their skill in hair-dressing.'

'It seemed a cruel reproach from a professed friend, said Sir John, and yet it is a literal truth. I know not what can be done for them, or for what they are fit. Their accomplishments might be turned to some account, if they were accompanied with real knowledge, useful acquirements, or sober habits. Mrs. Fentham wishes us to recommend them as governesses. But can I conscientiously recommend to others, girls with whom I could not trust my own family? Had they been taught to look no higher than the clerks of their father, who had been a clerk himself, they might have been happy; but those very men will now think them as much beneath themselves, as the young ladies lately thought they were above them.'

'I have often,' said Mr. Stanley, 'been amused with observing what a magic transformation the same event produces on two opposite classes of characters. The misfortunes of their acquaintance convert worldly friends into instantaneous strictness of principle. The faults of the distressed are produced as a plea for their own hard-hearted covetousness. While that very misfortune so relaxes the strictness of good men, that the faults are forgotten in the calamity: and they, who had been perpetually warning the prodigal of his impending ruin, when that ruin comes are the first to relieve him. The worldly friend sees only the errors of the sufferer, the Christian sees only his distress.'

It was agreed among us, that some small contribution must be added to a little sum, that had been already raised, for their immediate relief; but that nothing was so difficult, as effectually to serve persons whose views were so disproportioned to their deserts, and whose habits would be too likely to carry corruption into families who might receive them from charitable motives.

The conversation then fell insensibly on the pleasure we had enjoyed since we had been together; and on the delights of rational society, and confidential intercourse such as ours had been, where minds mingled, and affection and esteem were reciprocal. Mr. Stanley said many things which evinced how happily his piety was combined with the most affectionate tenderness of heart. Indeed I had always been delighted to observe in him, a quality which is not so common as it is thought to be, a thorough capacity for friendship.

'My dear Stanley,' said Sir John, 'it is of the very essence of human enjoyments, that they must have an end. I observe with regret, that the time assigned for our visit is more than elapsed. We have prolonged it beyond our intention, beyond our convenience: but we have, I trust, been imbibing principles, stealing habits,

and borrowing plans, which will ever make us consider this visit as an important era in our lives.

'My excellent Caroline is deeply affected with all she has seen and heard at the Grove. We must now leave it, though not without reluctance. We must go and endeavour to imitate what, six weeks ago, we almost feared to contemplate. Lady Belfield and I have compared notes. On the most mature deliberation, we agree that we have lived long enough to the world. We agree that it is time to begin to live to ourselves, and to Him who made us. We propose in future to make our winters in London much shorter. We intend to remove early every spring to Beechwood, which we will no longer consider as a temporary residence, but as our home; we will supply it with every thing that may make it interesting, and improving to us all. We are resolved to educate our children in the fear of God. Our fondness for them is rather increased than diminished; but in the exercise of that fondness, we will remember that we are to train them up for immortality. We will watch over them as creatures for whose eternal well being a vast responsibility will attach to ourselves.

'In our new plan of life, we shall have fewer sacrifices to make than most people in our situation; for we have long felt a growing indifference for things which we appeared to enjoy. Of the world, we are only going to give up that part which is not worth keeping, and of which we are really weary. In securing our real friends, we shall not regret, if we drop some acquaintance by the way. The wise and the worthy we shall more than ever cherish. In your family, we have enjoyed those true pleasures which entail no repentance. That cheerfulness which alone is worthy of accountable beings, we shall industriously maintain in our own. I bless God if we have not so many steps to tread back, as some others have, who are entering, upon principle, on a new course of life.

'We have always endeavoured, though with much imperfection, to fill some duties to each other, to our children, to our friends, and to the poor. But of the prime duty, the main spring of action and of all moral goodness, duty to God, we have not been sufficiently mindful. I hope we have at length learnt to consider Him as the fountain of all good, and the gospel of his Son, as the fountain of all hope. This new principle, I am persuaded, will never impair our cheerfulness, it will only fix it on a solid ground. By purifying the motive it will raise the enjoyment.

'But if we have not so many habits to correct as poor Carlton had, I question if we have not as many difficulties to meet in another way. His loose course was discreditable. His vices made him stand ill with the world. He would therefore acquire nothing but credit in changing his outward practice. Lady Belfield and I, on the contrary, stand rather too well with the world. We had just that external regularity, that cool indifference about our own spiritual improvement, and the wrong courses of our friends, which procure regard, because they do not interfere with others, nor excite jealousy for ourselves. But we have now to encounter that censure, which we have perhaps hitherto been too solicitous to avoid. It will still be our trial, but I humbly trust that it will be no longer our snare. Our morality pleased, because it seemed to proceed merely from a sense of propriety; our strictness will offend, when it is found to spring from a principle of religion.

'To what tendency in the heart of man, my dear Stanley, is it owing, that religion is commonly seen to excite more suspicion than the want of it? When a man of the world meets with a gay, thoughtless, amusing person, he seldom thinks of enquiring whether such a one be immoral, or an unbeliever, or a profligate, though the bent of his conversation rather leans that way. Satisfied with what he finds him, he feels little solicitude to ascertain what he really is. But no sooner does actual piety show itself in any man, than your friends are putting you on your guard;—there is instantly a suggestion, a hint, a suspicion. 'Does he not carry things too far?' 'Is he not righteous over much?' 'Is he not intemperate in his zeal?' 'Above all things is he *sincere?*' and in short—for that is the centre in which all the lines of suspicion and reprobation meet, '*Is he not a methodist?*'

'I trust, however, that, through divine grace our minds will be fortified against all attacks on this our weak side; this pass through which the sort of assaults most formidable to *us* will be likely to enter. I was mentioning this danger to Caroline this morning. She opened her Bible, over which she now spends much of her solitary time, and with an emphasis foreign from her usual manner read,

'Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?'

As Sir John repeated these words, I saw Lucilla, who was sitting next Lady Belfield, snatch one of her hands and kiss it, with a rapture which she had no power to controul. It was evident that nothing but our presence restrained her from rising to embrace her friend. Her fine eyes glistened, but seeing that I observed her, she gently let go the hand she held, and tried to look composed. I cannot describe the chastised but not less fervent joy of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. Their looks expressed the affectionate interest they took in Sir John's honest declaration. Their hearts overflowed with gratitude to Him without whom, 'nothing is strong, nothing is holy.' For my own part, I felt myself raised

Above this visible diurnal sphere.

Sir John afterwards said, 'I begin more and more to see the scantiness of all morality which has not the love of God for its motive. *That* virtue will not carry us safely, and will not carry us far, which looks to human estimation as its reward. As it was a false and inadequate principle which first set it agoing, it will always stop short of the true ends of goodness. Do not think, my dear Stanley,' continued he, 'that I fancy it is only our habits which want improving. Dr. Barlow has convinced me that there must be *a mutation of the whole man:* that the change in our practice must grow out of a new motive; not merely out of an amended principle, but a new principle; not an improve-

ment in some particulars, but a general determining change.'

'My dear Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'all reformation short of this, though it may obtain credit, brings neither peace nor acceptance. This change shows itself gradually perhaps, but unequivocally, by enlightening the understanding, awakening the conscience, purifying the affections, subduing the will, reforming the life.'

Lady Belfield expressed, with a sweet humility, her deep conviction of the truth of these remarks. After some farther discussion, she said, 'Sir John, I have been seriously thinking that I ought not to indulge in the expense of this intended conservatory. We will, if you please, convert the money to the building a charity school. I cannot consent to incur such a superfluous expense merely for my amusement.'

'My dear Caroline,' replied Sir John, 'through the undeserved goodness of God, my estate is so large, and through your excellent management it is so unimpaired, that we will not give up the conservatory, unless Mr. Stanley thinks we ought to give it up. But we will adopt Lucilla's idea of combining a charity with an indulgence —we will associate the charity school with the conservatory. This union will be a kind of monument to our friends at the Grove, from whom you have acquired the love of plants, and I of religious charity.'

We all looked with anxious expectation at Mr. Stanley. He gave it as his opinion, that as Lady Belfield was now resolved to live the greater part of the year in the country, she ought to have some amusements in lieu of those she was going to give up. 'Costly decorations and expensive gardens,' continued he, 'at a place where the proprietors do not so much as *intend* to reside, have always appeared to me among the infatuations of opulence. To the expenses which they do not *want*, it is adding an expense which they do not *see*. But surely, at a mansion where an affluent family actually live, all reasonable indulgences should be allowed. And where a garden and green-house are to supply to the proprietor, the place of the abdicated theatre and ball room; and especially when it is to be a means in her hands of attaching her children to the country, and of teaching them to love home, I declare myself in favour of the conservatory.'

Lucilla's eyes sparkled, but she said nothing.

'It would be unfair,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'to blame too severely those, who, living constantly in the country, give a little into its appropriate pleasures. The real objects of censure seem to be those who, grafting bad taste on bad habits, bring into the country the amusements of the town, and superadd to such as are local, and natural, and innocent, such as are foreign, artificial, and corrupt.'

'My dear Stanley,' said Sir John, 'we have resolved to indemnify our poor neighbours for two injuries which we have been doing them. The one is, by our having lived so little among them: for I have now learnt, that the mere act of residence is a kind of charity, even in the uncharitable, as it necessarily causes much money to be spent, even where little is given. The other is, that we will endeavour to make up for our past indifference to their spiritual concerns by now acting as if we were aware that the poor have souls as well as bodies; and that, in the great day of account, the care of both will attach to our responsibility.'

Such a sense of sober joy seemed to pervade our little party, that we were not aware that the night was far advanced. Our minds were too highly wrought for much loquacity, when Phœbe suddenly exclaimed, 'Papa, why is it that happiness does not make one merry? I never was half so happy in my life, and yet I can hardly forbear crying: and I believe it is catching, Sir, for look, Lucilla is not much wiser than myself.'

The next day but one after this conversation, our valuable friends left us. Our separation was softened by the prospect of a speedy meeting. The day before they set out, Lady Belfield made an earnest request to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, that they would have the goodness to receive Fanny Stokes into their family for a few months, previous to her entering theirs as governess. 'I can think of no method so likely,' continued she, 'to raise the tone of education in my own family, as the transfusion into it of your spirit, and the adoption of your regulations.'—Mr. and Mrs. Stanley most cheerfully acceded to the proposal.

Sir John said, 'I was meditating the same request, but with an additional clause tacked to it, that of sending our eldest girl with Fanny, that the child also may get imbued with something of your family spirit, and be broken into better habits than she has acquired from our hitherto relaxed discipline.' This proposal was also cordially approved.

CHAP. XLVI.

Dr. Barlow came to the Grove to take leave of our friends. He found Sir John and I sitting in the library with Mr. Stanley. 'As I came from Mr. Tyrrel's,' said the Doctor, 'I met Mr. Flam going to see him. He seemed so anxious about his old friend, that a wish strongly presented itself to my mind that the awful situation of the sick man might be salutary to him.

'It is impossible to say,' continued he, 'what injury religion has suffered from the opposite characters of these two men. Flam, who gives himself no concern about the matter, is kind and generous; while Tyrrel, who has made a high profession, is mean and sordid. It has been said, of what use is religion, when morality has made Mr. Flam a better man than religion makes Mr. Tyrrel? Thus men of the world reason! But nothing can be more false than their conclusions. Flam is naturally an open, warm hearted man, but incorrect in many respects, and rather loose in his principles. His natural good propensities religion would have improved into solid virtues, and would have cured the more exceptionable parts of his character. But from religion he stands aloof.

'Tyrrel is naturally narrow and selfish. Religion has not made, but found him such. But what a religion has he adopted! A mere assumption of terms; a dead, inoperative, uninfluencing

notion, which he has taken up: not, I hope, with a view to deceive others, but by which he has grossly deceived himself. He had heard that religion was a cure for an uneasy mind; but he did not attend to the means by which the cure is effected, and it relieved not him.

'The corrupt principle whence his vices proceeded was not subdued. He did not desire to subdue it, because in the struggle he must have parted with what he resolved to keep. He adopted what he believed was a cheap and easy religion; little aware that the great fundamental scripture doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ was a doctrine powerfully opposing our corruptions, and involving in its comprehensive requirements, a new heart and a new life.'

At this moment Mr. Flam called at the Grove. 'I am just come from Tyrrel,' said he. 'I fear it is nearly over with him. Poor Ned! he is very low, almost in despair. I always told him that the time would come when he would be glad to exchange notions for actions. I am grieved for him. The remembrance of a kind deed or two done to a poor tenant, would be some comfort to him now, at a time when every man stands in need of comfort.'

'Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'the scene which I have lately witnessed at Mr. Tyrrel's makes me serious. If you and I were alone, I am afraid it would make me old. I will, however, suppress the answer I was tempted to make you, because I should not think it prudent or respectful to utter before company what, I am persuaded your good sense would permit me to say were we alone.'

'Doctor,' replied the good tempered, but thoughtless man, 'don't stand upon ceremony. You know I love a debate, and I insist on your saying what was in your mind to say. I don't fear getting out of any scrape you can bring me into. You are too well bred to offend, and, I hope, I am too well-natured to be easily offended. Stanley, I know, always takes your side. Sir John, I trust, will take mine; and so will the young man here, if he is like most other young men.'

'Allow me then to observe,' returned Dr. Barlow, 'that if Mr. Tyrrel has unhappily deceived himself, by resting too exclusively on a mere speculative faith; a faith which by his conduct did not evince itself to be of the right sort; yet, on the other hand, a dependence for salvation on our own benevolence, our own integrity, or any other good quality we may possess, is an error not less fatal, and far more usual. Such a dependence does as practically set at nought the Redeemer's sacrifice, as the avowed rejection of the infidel. Honesty and benevolence are among the noblest qualities; but where the one is practised for reputation, and the other from mere feeling, they are sadly delusive as to the ends of practical goodness. They have both indeed their reward; integrity in the credit it brings, and benevolence in the pleasure it yields. Both are beneficial to society; both, therefore, are politically valuable. Both sometimes lead me to admire the ordinations of that over-ruling power, which often uses as instruments of public good, men who acting well in many respects, are essentially useful to others; but who, acting from motives merely human, forfeit for themselves that high reward which those virtues would obtain, if they were evidences of a lively faith, and the results of Christian principle. Think me not severe, Mr. Flam. To be personal is always extremely painful to me.'

'No, no, Doctor,' replied he, 'I know you mean well. 'Tis your trade to give good counsel; and your lot I suppose to have it seldom followed. I shall hear you without being angry. You in your turn must not be angry if I hear you without being better.'

'I respect you, Sir, too much,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'to deceive you in a matter of such infinite importance. For one man who errs on Mr. Tyrrel's principle, a hundred err on yours. His mistake is equally pernicious, but is not equally common. I must repeat it. For one whose soul is endangered through an unwarrantable dependance on the Saviour, multitudes are destroyed not only by the open rejection, but through a fatal neglect of the salvation wrought by him. Many more perish through a presumptuous confidence in their own merits, than through an unscriptural trust in the merits of Christ.'

'Well, Doctor,' replied Mr. Flam, 'I must say, that I think an ounce of morality will go farther toward making up my account, than a ton of religion, for which no one but myself would be the better.'

'My dear Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'I will not presume to determine between the exact comparative proportions of two ingredients both of which are so indispensable in the composition of a Christian. I dare not hazard the assertion which of the two is the more perilous state; but I think I am justified in saying which of the two cases occurs most frequently.'

Mr. Flam said, 'I should be sorry, Dr. Barlow, to find out at this time of day that I have been all my life long in an error.'

'Believe me, Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'it is better to find it out now, than at a still later period. One good quality can never be made to supply the absence of another. There are no substitutes in this warfare. Nor can all the good qualities put together, if we could suppose them to unite in one man, and to exist without religion, stand proxy for the death of Christ. If they could so exist, it would be in the degree only, and not in the perfection required by that law which says, *do this and live*. So kind a neighbour as you are, so honest a gentleman, so generous a master as you are allowed to be, I cannot, Sir, think without pain of your losing the reward of such valuable qualities, by your placing your hope of eternal happiness in the exercise of them. Believe me, Mr. Flam, it is easier for a compassionate man, if he be not religious, to 'give all his goods to the poor,' than to bring every thought, 'nay than to bring *any* thought' into captivity to the obedience of Christ! But be assured, if we give ever so much with our hands, while we withhold our hearts from God, though we may do much good to others, we do none to ourselves.'

'Why, surely,' said Mr. Flam, 'you don't mean to insinuate that I should be in a safer state if I never did a kind thing!'

'Quite the contrary,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'but I could wish to see your good actions exalted, by springing from a higher principle, I mean the love of God; ennobled by being practised to a higher end, and purified by your renouncing all self-complacency in the performance.'

'But is there not less danger, Sir, said Mr. Flam, 'in being somewhat proud of what one really *does*, than in doing nothing? And is it not more excusable to be a little satisfied with what one really *is*, than in hypocritically pretending to be what one is *not*?'

'I must repeat,' returned Dr. Barlow, 'that I cannot exactly decide on the question of relative enormity between two opposite sins. I cannot pronounce which is the best of two states so very bad.'

'Why now, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, 'what particular sin can you charge me with?'

'I erect not myself into an accuser,' replied Dr. Barlow; 'but permit me to ask you, Sir, from what motive is it that you avoid any wrong practice? Is there any one sin from which you abstain through fear of offending your Maker?'

'As to that,' replied Mr. Flam, 'I can't say I ever considered about the motive of the thing. I thought it was quite enough not to do it. Well but Doctor, since we are gone so far in the catechism, what duty to my neighbours can you convict me of omitting?'

'It will be said, Sir,' said the Doctor, 'if you can indeed stand so close a scrutiny, as that to which you challenge me, even on your own principles. But tell me, with that frank honesty which marks your character, does your kindness to your neighbour spring from the true fountain, the love of God? That you do many right things I am most willing to allow. But do you perform them from a sense of obedience to the law of your Maker? Do you perform them because they are commanded in his word, and conformable to his will?'

'I can't say I do,' said Mr. Flam, 'but if the thing be right in itself, that appears to me to be all in all. It seems hard to encumber a man of business like me with the action and motive too. Surely if I serve a man, it can make no difference to him, *why* I serve him.'

'To yourself, my dear Sir,' said the Doctor, 'it makes all the difference in the world. Besides, good actions, performed on any other principle than obedience, are not only spurious as to their birth, but they are defective in themselves; they commonly want something in weight and measure.'

Why, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, 'I have often heard you say in the pulpit that the best are not perfect. Now, as this is the case, I will tell you how I manage. I think it a safe way to average one's good qualities; to throw a bad one against a good one, and if the balance sinks on the right side the man is safe.'

Doctor Barlow shook his head, and was beginning to express his regret at such a delusive casuistry, when Mr. Flam interrupted him by saying, 'Well, Doctor, my great care in life has been to avoid all suspicion of hypocrisy.'

'You cannot do better,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'than to avoid its *reality*. But, for my own part, I believe religious hypocrisy to be rather a rare vice among persons of your station of life. Among the vulgar, indeed, I fear it is not so rare. In neighbourhoods where there is much real piety, there is no small danger of some false profession. But among the higher classes of society, serious religion confers so little credit on him who professes it, that a gentleman is not likely to put on appearances from which he knows he is far more likely to lose reputation than to acquire it. When such a man, therefore, assumes the character of piety, I own I always feel disposed to give him full credit for possessing it. His religion may indeed be mistaken; it may be defective; it may be unsound; but the chances are very much in favour of its not being insincere. Where the "fruits of the Spirit abound, they will appear."'

'Now, my dear Doctor,' replied Mr. Flam, 'is not that cant? What do you mean by the fruits of the Spirit? Would it not have been more worthy of your good sense to have said morality and virtue? Would not these terms have been more simple and intelligible?'

'They might be so,' replied the Doctor, 'but they would not rise quite so high. They would not take in my *whole* meaning. The fruit of the Spirit indeed always includes *your* meaning, but it includes much more. It is something more than worldly morality, something holier than mere human virtue. I rather conceive morality, in your sense, to be the effect of natural temper, natural conscience, or worldly prudence, or perhaps a combination of all three. The fruit of the Spirit is the morality of the renewed heart. Worldly morality is easily satisfied with itself. It sits down contented with its own meagre performances—with legal honesty, with bare weight justice. It seldom giveth a particle "that is not in the bond." It is always making out its claim to doubtful indulgence; it litigates its right to every inch of contested enjoyment; and is so fearful of not getting enough, that it commonly takes more than its due. It is one of the cases where "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."'

'It obtains, however, its worldly reward. It procures a good degree of respect and commendation; but it is not attended by the silent train of the Christian graces, with that 'joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,' which are the fruits of the Spirit, and the evidences of a Christian.—These graces are calculated to adorn all that is right with all that is amiable, 'whatsoever things are honest and just,' with 'whatsoever things are lovely and of good report.' And, to crown all, they add the deepest humility and most unfeigned self-abasement to the most correct course of conduct: a course of conduct which, though a Christian never thinks himself at liberty to neglect, he never feels himself permitted or disposed to be proud of.'

'Well, well, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, 'I never denied the truth of Christianity, as Carlton formerly did. 'Tis the religion of the country by law established. And I often go to church, because that too is established by law, for which you know I have a great veneration. 'Tis the religion of my ancestors, I like it for that too.'

'But, Sir,' said the Doctor, 'would you not show your veneration for the church more fully

it you attended it twice, instead of once?' And your veneration for the law, if instead of going sometimes, you went every Sunday, which you know both the law of God and man enjoins.'

'Why, unluckily,' returned Mr. Flam, 'the hour of service interferes with that of dinner.'

'Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, smiling, 'hours are so altered, that I believe if the church were to new model the calender, she would say that dinners ought to be placed among the *moveable feasts*. An hour earlier or later would accommodate the difference, liberate your servants, and enable you to do a thing right in itself, and beneficial in its example.'

Mr. Flam not being prepared with an answer went on with his confession of faith.—'Doctor,' said he, 'I am a better Christian than you think. I take it for granted that the Bible is true, for I have heard many men say who examine for themselves, which I cannot say I ever had time or inclination to do, that no opposer has ever yet refuted the scripture account of miracles and prophecies. So if you don't call this being a good Christian, I don't know what is.'

Dr. Barlow replied, 'nothing can be better as far as it goes. But allow me to say, that there is another kind of evidence of the truth of our religion, which is peculiar to the real Christian. I mean that evidence of the truth which arises from his individual conviction of the efficacy of Christianity in remedying the disorders of his own nature. He who has had his own temper improved, his evil propensities subdued, and his whole character formed anew, by being cast into the mould of Christianity, will have little doubt of the truth of a religion which has produced such obvious effects in himself.—The truths for which his reason pleads, and in which his understanding, after much examination, is able to rest, having had a purifying influence on his heart, become established principles, producing in him at the same time holiness of life and peace of conscience. The stronger evidence a man has of his own internal improvement, the stronger will be his conviction of the truth of the religion he professes.'

'There are worse men than I am, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, rather seriously.

'Sir,' replied he, 'I heartily wish every gentleman had your good qualities. But as we shall be judged positively and not comparatively, as our characters will be finally decided upon, not by our superiority to other men, nor merely by our inferiority to the divine rule, but by our departure from it, I wish you would begin to square your life by that rule now; which, in order that you may do, you should begin to study it. While we live in a total neglect of the Bible, we must not talk of our deficiencies, our failings, our imperfections, as if these alone stood between us and the mercy of God. That indeed is the language and the state of the devout Christian. Stronger terms must be used to express the alienation of heart of those, who, living in the avowed neglect of Scripture, may be said, forgive me, Sir, 'to live without God in the world.' Ignorance is no plea in a gentleman. In a land of light and knowledge ignorance itself is a sin.'

Here Dr. Barlow being silent, and Mr. Flam not being prepared to answer, Mr. Stanley said, 'That the pure and virtuous dispositions, which arise out of a sincere belief of Christianity, are not more frequently seen in persons professing themselves to be Christians, is, unhappily, one of the strongest arguments against us that can be urged by unbelievers. Instances, however, occur, which are too plain to be denied, of individuals who, having been led by divine grace cordially to receive Christianity, have exhibited in their conduct a very striking proof of its excellence; and among these are some who, like our friend Carlton, had previously led very corrupt lives. The ordinary class of Christians, who indeed scarcely deserve the name, as well as sceptics and unbelievers, would do well to mark the lives of the truly religious, and to consider them as furnishing a proof which will come powerfully in aid of that body of testimony with which Christianity is intrenched on all sides. And these observers should remember, that though they themselves may not yet possess the best evidence in favour of Christianity, which arises from an inward sense of its purifying nature, they may nevertheless aspire after it; and those who have any remaining doubts should encourage themselves with the hope, that if they fully yield themselves to the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, a salutary change will in time be effected in their own hearts, which will furnish them with irresistible evidence of its truth.'

I could easily perceive, that though Mr. Stanley and Dr. Barlow entertained small hopes of the beneficial effect of their discourse on the person to whom it was directed; yet they prolonged it with an eye to Sir John Belfield, who sat profoundly attentive, and encouraged them by his looks.

As to Mr. Flam, it was amusing to observe the variety of his motions, gestures, and contortions, and the pains he took to appear easy and indifferent, and even victorious; sometimes fixing the end of his whip on the floor, and whirling it round at full speed: then working it into his boot: then making up his mouth for a whistle, but stopping short to avoid being guilty of the incivility of interruption.

At length with the same invincible good nature, and with the same pitiable insensibility to his own state, he arose to take leave. He shook us all by the hand, Dr. Barlow twice, saying, 'Doctor, I don't think the worse of you for your plain speaking. He is a knave or a fool that is angry with a good man for doing his duty. 'Tis my fault if I don't take his advice: but 'tis his fault if he does not give it. Parsons are paid for it, and ought not to be mealy mouthed when there is a proper opening, such as poor Tyrrel's case gave you. I challenged *you*. I should perhaps have been angry if you had challenged *me*. It makes all the difference in the event of a duel which is the challenger. As to myself, it is time enough for me to think of the things you recommend. Thank God, I am in excellent good health and spirits, and am not yet quite fifty. 'There is a time for all things.' Even the Bible allows that.'

The Doctor shook his head at this sad misapplication of the text. Mr. Flam went away,

pressing us all to dine with him next day; he had killed a fine buck, and he assured Dr. Barlow that he should have the best port in his cellar. The Doctor pleaded want of time, and the rest of the party could not afford a day, out of the few which remained to us;' but we promised to call on him. He nodded kindly at Dr. Barlow, saying, 'well, Doctor, as you won't come to the buck, one of his haunches shall come to you; so tell Madam to expect it.

As soon as he had left the room, we all joined in lamenting that the blessings of health should ever be produced as arguments for neglecting to secure those blessings which have eternity for their object.

'Unhappy man!' said Dr. Barlow, 'little does he think that he is, if possible, more the object of my compassion than poor Mr. Tyrrel. Tyrrel, it is true, is lying on a sick, probably on a dying bed. His body is in torture. His mind is in anguish. He has to look back on a life, the retrospect of which can afford him no ray of comfort. But he *knows* his misery. The hand of God is upon him. His proud heart is brought low. His self-confidence is subdued. His high imaginations are cast down. His abasement of soul, as far as I can judge, is sincere. He abhors himself in dust and ashes. He sees death at hand. He feels that the sting of death is sin. All subterfuge is at an end. He is at last seeking the only refuge of penitent sinners, I trust, on right grounds. His state is indeed perilous in the extreme: yet awful as it is, he *knows* it. He will not open his eyes on the eternal world in a state of delusion. But what shall awaken poor Mr. Flam from his dream of security? His high health, his unbroken spirits, his prosperous circumstances and various blessings, are so many snares to him. He thinks that 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and still more abundant. Even the wretched situation of his dying friend, though it awakens compassion, awakens not compunction. Nay, it affords matter of triumph rather than of humiliation. He feeds his vanity with compassions from which he contrives to extract comfort. His own offences being of a different kind, instead of lamenting them, he glories in being free from those which belong to an opposite cast of character. Satisfied that he has not the vices of Tyrrel, he never once reflects on his own unrepented sins. Even his good qualities increase his danger. He wraps himself up in that constitutional good nature, which being partly founded on vanity and self-approbation, strengthens his delusion, and hardens him against reproof.'

CHAP. XLVII.

In conversing with Mr. Stanley on my happy prospects, and my future plans; after having referred all concerns of a pecuniary nature to be settled between him and Sir John Belfield, I ventured to entreat that he would crown his goodness, and my happiness, by allowing me to solicit his daughter for an early day.

Mr Stanley said, the term *early* was relative; but he was afraid that he should hardly consent to what I might consider even as a late one. 'In parting with such a child as Lucilla,' added he, 'some weaning time must be allowed to the tenderest of mothers. The most promising marriage, and surely none can promise more happiness than that to which we are looking, is a heavy trial to fond parents. To have trained a creature with anxious fondness, in hope of her repaying their solicitude hereafter by the charms of her society, and then as soon as she becomes capable of being a friend and companion to lose her for ever, is such a trial that I sometimes wonder at the seeming impatience of parents to get rid of a treasure, of which they best know the value. The sadness which attends the consummation even of our dearest hopes on these occasions, is one striking instance of that *Vanity of human wishes*, on which Juvenal and Johnson have so beautifully expatiated.'

'A little delay indeed I shall require, from motives of prudence as well as fondness. Lucilla will not be nineteen these three months and more. You will not, I trust, think me unreasonable if I say, that neither her mother nor myself can consent to part with her before that period.'

'Three months!' exclaimed I, with more vehemence than politeness. 'Three months! It is impossible.'

'It is very possible,' said he, smiling, 'that you can wait, and very certain that we shall not consent sooner.'

'Have you any doubts, Sir,' said I, 'have you any objections which I can remove, and which, being removed, may abridge this long probation?'

'None,' said he, kindly. 'But I consider even nineteen as a very early age: too early indeed, were not my mind so completely at rest about you, on the grand points of religion, morals, and temper, that delay could, I trust, afford me no additional security. You will, however, my dear Charles, find so much occupation in preparing your affairs, and your mind, for so important a change, that you will not find the time of absence so irksome as you fancy.

'Absence, Sir,' replied I. 'What then, do you intend to banish me?'

'No,' replied he, smiling again. 'But I intended to send you *home*. A sentence, indeed, which in this dissipated age is thought the worst sort of exile. You have now been absent six or seven months. This absence has been hitherto justifiable. It is time to return to your affairs, to your duties. Both the one and the other always slide into some disorder by a too long separation from the place of their legitimate exercise. Your steward will want inspection, your tenants may want redress, your poor always want assistance.'

Seeing me look irresolute, 'I must, I find,' added he, with the kindest look and voice, 'be compelled to the inhospitable necessity of turning you out of doors.'

'Live without Lucilla three months!' said I. 'Allow me, Sir, at least to remain a few weeks longer at the Grove.'

'Love is a bad calculator,' replied Mr. Stanley 'I believe he never learnt arithmetic

Don't you know that as you are enjoined a three months banishment, that the sooner you go, the sooner you will return? And that, however long your stay now is, your three months' absence will still remain to be accomplished. To speak seriously; Lucilla's sense of propriety, as well as that of Mrs. Stanley, will not permit you to remain much longer under the same roof, now that the motive will become so notorious. Besides that an act of self-denial is a good principle to set out upon, business and duties will fill up your active hours, and an intercourse of letters with her you so reluctantly quit, will not only give an interest to your leisure, but put you both still more completely in possession of each other's character.'

'I will set out to-morrow, Sir,' said I, earnestly, 'in order to begin to hasten the day of my return.'

'Now you are as much too precipitate on the other side,' replied he. 'A few days, I think, may be permitted, without any offence to Lucilla's delicacy. This even her mother pleads for.'

'With what excellence will this blessed union give me an alliance!' replied I; 'I will go directly and thank Mrs. Stanley for this goodness.'

I found Mrs. Stanley and her daughter together, with whom I had a long and interesting conversation. They took no small pains to convince my judgment, that my departure was perfectly proper. My will however continued rebellious. But as I had been long trained to the habit of submitting my will to my reason, I acquiesced, though not without murmuring, and as they told me with very bad grace.

I informed Mrs. Stanley of an intimation I had received from Sir George Aston of his attachment to Phœbe, and of his mother's warm approbation to his choice, adding that he alleged her extreme youth, as the ground of his deferring to express his hope, that his plea might one day be received with favour.

'He forgot to allege his own youth,' replied she, 'which is a reason almost equally cogent.'

Miss Stanley and I agreed that a connexion more desirable in all respects could not be expected.

'When I assure you,' replied Mrs. Stanley, 'that I am quite of your opinion, you will think me inconsistent if I add that I earnestly hope such a proposal will not be made by Sir George, lest his precipitancy should hinder the future accomplishment of a wish, which I may be allowed remotely to indulge.'

'What objection,' said I, 'can Mr. Stanley possibly make to such a proposal, except that his daughter is too young?'

'I see,' replied she, 'that you do not yet completely know Mr. Stanley; or rather you do not know all that he has done for the Aston family. His services have been very important, not only in that grand point which you and I think the most momentous; but he has also very successfully exerted himself in settling Lady Aston's worldly affairs, which were in the utmost disorder. The large estate, which had suffered by her own ignorance of business, and the dishonesty of a steward, he has not only enabled her to clear, but put her in the way greatly to improve. This skill and kindness in worldly things so raised his credit in the eyes of the guardian, young Sir George's uncle, that he declared he should never again be so much afraid, of religious men; whom he had always understood to be without judgment, or kindness, or disinterestedness.

'Now,' added Mrs. Stanley, 'don't you perceive that not only the purity of Mr. Stanley's motives, but religion itself would suffer, should we be forward to promote this connexion? Will not this Mr. Aston say, that sinister designs influenced all this zeal and kindness, and that Sir George's estate was improved with an eye to his own daughter? It will be said that these religious people always know what they are about—that when they seem to be purely serving God, they are resolved not to serve him for nothing, but always keep their own interest in view. Should Sir George's inclination continue, and his principles stand the siege which the world will not fail to lay to a man of his fortune—some years hence, when he is complete master of his actions, his character formed, and his judgment ripened to direct his choice, so as to make it evident to the world, that it was not the effect of influence, this connexion is an event to which we should look forward with much pleasure.'

'Never,' exclaimed I, 'no not once, have I been disappointed in my expectation of consistency in Mr. Stanley's character. O, my beloved parents, how wise was your injunction that I should make *consistency the test of true piety!* It is thus that Christians should always keep the credit of religion in view, if they would promote its interests in the world.'

When I communicated to Miss Stanley my conversation with *her* father, and read over with her the letters of *mine*, how tenderly did she weep! How were my own feelings renewed! To be thus assured that she was selected for their son, by my deceased parents, seemed, to her pious mind, to shed a sacredness on our union. How did she venerate their virtues! How feelingly regret their loss!

Before I left the country, I did not omit a visit of civility to Mr. Flam. The young ladies, as Sir John predicted, had stept back into their natural character, and natural undress; though he was too severe when he added, that their hopes in assuming the other were not at an end.

They both asked me, if I was not moped to death at the Grove: the Stanley's, they said, were *good sort* of people, but quite *mauvais ton*, as every body must be who did not spend half the year in London. Miss Stanley was a fine girl enough, but knew nothing of the world, wanted manner, which two or three winters in town would give her. 'Better as she is,' interrupted Mr. Flam, 'better as she is. She is a pattern daughter, and will make a pattern wife. *Her* mother has no care nor trouble; I wish I could say as much of all mothers. I never saw a bad humour, or a bad dinner in the house. She is always at home, always in spirits, and always in temper. She is cheerful as if she had no religion, and as useful as if she could not spell her own receipt book.'

I was affected with this generous tribute to my Lucilla's virtues: and when he wished me

joy, as he cordially shook me by the hand, I could not forbear saying to myself, why will not this good-natured man go to heaven?

I next paid a farewell visit to Mr. and Mrs. Carlton, and to the amiable family at Aston Hall, and to Dr. Barlow. How rich has this excursion made me in valuable friendships; to say nothing of the inestimable connexion at the Grove! I did not forget to assure Dr. Barlow, that if any thing could add a value to the blessing which awaited me, it was, that his hand would consecrate it.

Through the good Doctor I received a message from Mr. Tyrrel, requesting me to make him a visit of charity before I quitted the neighbourhood. I instantly obeyed the summons. I found him totally changed in all respects, a body wasted by disease, a mind apparently full of contrition, and penetrated with that deep humility, in which he had been so eminently deficient.

He earnestly entreated my prayers, adding, 'though it is presumption in so unworthy a being as I am, to suppose his intercession may be heard, I will pray for a blessing on your happy prospects. A connexion with such a family is itself a blessing. Oh! that my nephew had been worthy of it! It is to recommend that poor youth to your friendship, that I invited you to this melancholy visit. I call him poor, because I have neglected to enrich his mind: but he will have too much of this world's goods. May he employ well what I have risked my soul to amass! Counsel him, dear Sir; admonish him. Recal to his mind his dying uncle. I would now give my whole estate, nay, I would live upon the alms I have refused, to purchase one more year, though spent in pain and misery, that I might prove the sincerity of my repentance. Be to Ned what my blessed Stanley would have been to me. But my pride repelled his kindness. I could not bear his superiority. I turned away my eyes from a model I could not imitate.' I now entreated him to spare himself, but after a few minutes pause he proceeded.

'As to Ned, I trust he is not ill-disposed, but I have neither furnished his mind for solitude nor fortified his heart for the world. I foolishly thought that to keep him ignorant was to keep him safe. I have provided for him the snare of a large fortune, without preparing him for the use of it. I fell into an error not uncommon, that of grudging the expenses of education to a relation for whom I designed my estate. I have thus fitted him for a companion to the vulgar, and a prey to the designing. I thought it sufficient to keep him from actual vice, without furnishing him with arguments to combat it, or with principles to abhor it.'

Here the poor man paused for want of breath. I was too much affected to speak.

At length he went on. 'I have made over to Dr. Barlow's son two thousand pounds for completing his education. I have also give two thousand pounds a-piece to the two elder daughters of Mr. Stanley in aid of their charities. I have made a deed of gift of this, and of a large sum for charitable purposes at the discretion of my executors. This I hoped would prove my sincerity more than a legacy, as it will be paid immediately. A refusal to accept it will greatly distress me. Ned still will have too much left, unless he employs it to better purposes than I have done.'

Though deeply moved, I hardly knew what to reply. I wished to give him comfort, but distrusted my own judgment as to the manner. I promised my best services to his nephew.

'Oh, good young man!' cried he, 'if ever you are tempted to forget God, as I did for above thirty years; or to mock him by an outward profession as I have lately done, think of me. Think of one who for the largest portion of his life, lived as if there were no God; and who, since he has made a profession of Christianity, deceived his own soul, no less by the religion he adopted, than by his former neglect of all religion. My delusion was this, I did not choose to be good, but I chose to be saved. It is no wonder then that I should be struck with a religion, which I hoped would free me from the discipline of moral rectitude, and yet deliver me from the punishment of having neglected it. Will God accept my present forced submission? Will he accept a penitence of which I may have no time to prove the sincerity? Tell me—You are a Christian.'

I was much distressed. I thought it neither modest nor prudent for me to give a decisive answer. He grasped my hand. 'Then,' said he, 'you think my case hopeless. You think the Almighty cannot forgive me. Thus pressed, I ventured to say, 'to doubt his will to pardon, and his power to save, would, as it appears to me, Sir, be a greater fault than any you have committed.'

'One great comfort is left,' replied he, 'the mercy I have abused is infinite. Tell Stanley I now believe with him, that if we pretend to trust in God, we must be governed by him; if we truly believe in him, we shall obey him; if we think he sent his Son to save sinners, we shall hate sin.'

I ventured to congratulate him on his frame of mind: and seeing him quite overcome, took leave of him with a heart deeply touched with this salutary scene. The family at the Grove were greatly moved with my description, and with the method poor Tyrrel had found out of eluding the refusal of his liberal-minded executors to accept of legacies.

The day fixed for my departure too soon arrived. I took a most affectionate leave of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, and a very tender one of Lucilla, who gratified my affection by the emotion she evidently felt, and my delicacy by the effort she made to conceal it. Phœbe wept outright. The children all hung about me, each presenting me some of her flowers, saying they had nothing else to give me; and assuring me that Rachel should be no loser by it. Little Celia was clamorous in her sorrow, when she saw me ascend the curricle, in which neither she nor Lucilla was to have a place. I took the sweet child up into the carriage, and placed her by me, and gently drove her through the park, at the gate of which I consigned her to the arms of her father, who had good-naturedly walked by the side of the carriage in order to carry her back. I drove off, enriched with his prayers

and blessings, which seemed to insure me protection.

Though this separation from all I loved threw a transient sadness around me, I had abundant matter for delightful reflection and pious gratitude. I experienced the truth of Phœbe's remark, that happiness is a serious thing. While pleasure manifests itself by extravagant gaiety, exuberant spirits, and overt acts, happiness retreats to its own proper region, the heart. There concentrating its feelings, it contemplates its treasures, meditates on its enjoyments and still more fondly on its hopes: counts up its mercies, and feels the consummation of them in looking to the fountain from whence they flow; feels every blessing immeasurably heightened by the heart-cheering reflection, that the most exquisite human pleasures are not the perfection of his nature, but only a gracious earnest, a bounteous pre-libation of that blessedness which is without measure, and shall be without end.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Before the Belfields had quitted us, it was stipulated that we should, with submission to the will of a higher power, all meet for six weeks every other summer at Stanley Grove, and pass a month together every intermediate year, either at the Priory, or at Beechwood.

I passed through London, and spent three days in Cavendish-square, my friends having kindly postponed their departure for the country on my account. Lady Belfield voluntarily undertook whatever was necessary for the internal decoration of the Priory; while Sir John took on himself the friendly office of arranging for me all preliminaries with Mr. Stanley, whose largeness of heart, and extreme disinterestedness, I knew I durst not trust, without some such check as I placed in the hand of our common friend.

As soon as all personal concerns were adjusted, Lady Belfield said, 'I have something to communicate, in which I am persuaded you will take a lively interest. On my return to town, I found, among my visiting tickets, several of Lady Melbury's. The porter told me she had called every day for the last week, and seemed very impatient for my return. Finding she was still in town, I went to her immediately. She was not at home, but came to me within an hour. She expressed great joy at seeing me. She looked more beautiful than ever, at least the blush of conscious shame, which mingled with her usual sweetness, rendered her more interesting.

'She was at a loss how to begin. With a perplexed air she said, 'Why did you stay so long? I have sadly wanted you. Where is Sir John? I have wanted counsellors—comforters—friends. I have never had a friend.'

'I was affected at an opening so unexpected. Sir John came in. This increased her confusion. At length, after the usual compliments, she thus addressed him: 'I am determined to conquer this false shame. There is not a worse symptom in human nature than that we blush to own what we have not been afraid to do. From you, Sir John, I heard the first remonstrance which ever reached my ears. You ought to be informed of its effect. You cannot have forgotten our conversation in my coach,* after we had quitted the scene which filled you with contempt for me, and me with anguish for the part I had acted. You reasonably supposed that my remorse would last no longer than the scene which inspired it. You left me alone. My lord dined abroad. I was abandoned to all the horrors of solitude. I wanted somebody to keep me from myself. Mrs. Stokes dying; her husband dead! the sweet flower-girl pining for want, and I the cause of all! The whole view presented such a complication of misery to my mind, and of guilt to my heart, as made me insupportable to myself.

'"It was Saturday. I was of course engaged to the opera. I was utterly unfit to go, but wanted courage to frame an excuse. Fortunately Lady Bell Finley, whom I had promised to chaperon, sent to excuse herself. This set my person at liberty, but left my mind upon the rack. Though I should have rejoiced in the company even of my own chambermaid, so much did I dread being left to my own thoughts, yet I resolved to let no one in that night. I had scarcely passed a single evening out of the giddy circle for several years. For the first time in my life I was driven to look into myself. I took a retrospect of my past conduct; a confused and imperfect one indeed. This review aggravated my distress. Still I pursued my distracting self-inquisition. Not for millions would I pass such another night!

'"I had done as wrong things before, but they had never been thus brought home to me. My extravagance must have made others suffer, but their sufferings had not been placed before my eyes. What was not seen, I had hoped might not be true. I had indeed heard distant reports of the consequences of my thoughtless expense, but they might be invented—they might be exaggerated. At the flower-maker's I *witnessed* the ruin I had made—I *saw* the fruits of my unfeeling vanity—I *beheld* the calamities I had caused. O how much mischief would such actual observations prevent! I was alone. I had no dependant to qualify the deed no sycophant to divert my attention to more soothing objects. Though Sir John's honest expostulation had touched me to the quick; yet I confess, had I found any of my coteric at home, had I gone to the opera, had a joyous supper succeeded, all together would have quite obliterated the late mortifying scene. I should, as I have often done before, have lost all sense of the Stoke's misery, and of my own crime."

'Here,' pursued Lady Belfield, 'the sweet creature looked so contrite, that Sir John and I were both deeply affected.'

'"You are not accustomed, Sir John," resumed she, with a faint smile, "to the office of a confessor, nor I to that of a penitent. But I make it a test to myself of my own sincerity to tell you the whole truth.

'"I wandered from room to room, fancying

* See ch. 12.

I should be more at ease in any other than that in which I was. I envied the starving tenant of the meanest garret. I envied Mrs. Stokes herself. Both might have pitied the pangs which rent my heart, as I roamed through the decorated apartments of our spacious house. In the gayest part of London I felt the dreariness of a desert. Surrounded with magnificence, I endured a sense of want and wo, of which a blameless beggar can form no idea.

'"I went into the library; I took up a book which my lord had left on the table. It was a translation from a Roman classic. I opened it at the speech of the tragedian to Pompey: "*The time will come that thou shalt mourn deeply, because thou didst not mourn sooner!*" I was struck to the heart. "Shall a pagan," said I, "thus forcibly reprove me; and shall I neglect to search for truth at the fountain?

'"I knew my lord would not come home from his club till the morning. The struggle in my soul between principle and pride was severe; but after a bitter conflict, I resolved to employ the night in writing him a long letter. In it I ingenuously confessed the whole state of my mind, and what had occasioned it. I implored his permission for my setting out next morning for Melbury Castle. I entreated him to prevail on his excellent aunt, Lady Jane, whom I had so shamefully slighted, to accompany me. I knew she was a character of that singular class, who would be glad to revenge herself for my ill-treatment by doing me a service. Her company would be at once a pledge to my lord of the purity of my intentions, and to myself a security against falling into worse society. I assured him that I had no safeguard but in flight. An additional reason which I alleged for my absence was, that as I had promised to give a grand masquerade in a fortnight, the evading this expense would nearly enable me to discharge the debt which sat so heavy on my conscience.

'"I received a note from him as soon as he came home. With his usual complaisance, he complied with my request. With his usual nonchalance, he neither troubled me with his reproaches, nor comforted me with approbation.

'"As he knew that Lady Jane usually rose about the hour he came home from St. James's street, he obligingly went to her at once. I had not been in bed. He came to my dressing-room, and informed me that his aunt had consented at the first word. I expressed my gratitude to them both, saying, that I was ready to set out that very day."

'"You must wait till to-morrow," said he. "There is no accounting for the oddities of some people. Lady Jane told me she could not possibly travel on a Sunday. I wondered where was the impossibility. Sunday, I assured her, was the only day for travelling in comfort, as the road was not obstructed by wagons and carts. She replied, with a gravity which made me laugh, 'that she should be ashamed to think that a person of her rank and education should be indebted, for her being able to trample with more convenience on a divine law, to the piety of the vulgar who durst not violate it.' 'Did you ever hear any thing so whimsical, Matilda?' I said nothing, but my heart smote me. Never will I repeat this offence.

'"On the Monday we set out, I had kept close the preceding day, under pretence of illness. This I also assigned as an excuse in the cards to my invited guests, pleading the necessity of going into the country for change of air. Shall I own I dreaded being shut up in a barouche, and still more in the lonely castle, with Lady Jane? I looked for nothing every moment but 'the thorns and briars of reproof.' But I soon found that the woman whom I had quizzed as a methodist, was a most entertaining companion. Instead of austerity in her looks, and reproach in her language, I found nothing but kindness and affection, but vivacity and elegance. While she soothed my sorrows, she strengthened my better purposes. Her conversation gradually revived in my mind tastes and principles which had been early sown in it, but which the world seemed completely to have eradicated.

'"In the neighbourhood of the Castle, Lady Jane carried me to visit the abodes of poverty and sickness. I envied her large but discriminating liberality, and the means she possessed of gratifying it, while I shed tears at the remembrance of my own squandered thousands. I had never been hard-hearted, but I had always given to importunity rather than to want, or merit. I blushed, that while I had been absurdly profuse to cases of which I knew nothing, my own village had been perishing with a contagious sickness.

'"While I amused myself with drawing, my aunt often read to me some rationally entertaining book, occasionally introducing religious reading and discourse, with a wisdom and moderation which increased the effect of both. Knowing my natural levity, and wretched habits, she generally waited till the proposal came from myself. At first when I suggested it, it was to please her, at length I began to find a degree of pleasure in it myself.

'"You will say I have not quite lost my romance. A thought struck me, that the first use I made of my pencil, should serve to perpetuate at least one of my offences. You know I do not execute portraits badly. With a little aid from fancy, which I thought made it allowable to bring separate circumstances into one piece, I composed a picture. It consisted of a detached figure in the back ground of poor Stokes, seen through the grate of his prison on a bed of straw; and a group, composed of his wife in the act of expiring, Fanny bending over a wreath of roses, withered with the tears she was shedding, and myself in the horrors in which you saw me,

Spectatress of the mischief I had made.

'"Wherever I go this picture shall always be my companion. It hangs in my closet, my dear friends,' added she, with a look of infinite sweetness, 'whenever I am tempted to contract a debt, or to give in to any act of vanity or dissipation which may lead to debt, if after having looked on this picture I can pursue the project, renounce me, cast me off for ever!

'"You know Lady Jane's vein of humour. One day as we were conversing together, I confessed that, at the very time I was the object of general notice, and my gaiety the theme of general envy, I had never known happiness. 'I do not wonder at it,' said she. 'Those who greedily pursue admiration, would be ashamed to sit down with so quiet a thing as happiness.' 'My dear Lady Jane,' said I, 'correct me, counsel me, instruct me, you have been too lenient, too forbearing.' 'Well,' said she, with a cheerful tone, 'as you appoint me your physician, as you disclose your case, and ask relief, I will give you a prescription, which, though the simplest thing in the world, will, I am certain, go a great way towards curing you. As you are barely six and twenty, your disease I trust is not inveterate. If you will be an obedient patient, I will answer for your recovery.'

'"I assured her of my willing adoption of any remedy she might prescribe, as I was certain she would consider my weakness, and adapt her treatment, not so much to what my case absolutely required, as to what my strength was able to bear.

'"Well then,' said she—'But pray observe I am no quack. I do not undertake to restore you instantaneously. Though my medicine will work surely, it will work slowly. You know,' added she, smiling, 'tho success of all alteratives depends on the punctuality with which they are taken, and the constancy with which they are followed up. Mine must be taken two or three times a day, in small quantities at first, the dose to be enlarged as you are able to bear it. I can safely assert, with the advertising doctors, that it may be used full or fasting, in all weathers, and all seasons; but I cannot add with them that *it requires no confinement.*'

'"I grew impatient and begged she would come to the point. 'Softly, Matilda,' said she, 'softly, I must first look into my receipt-book, for fear I should mistake any of my ingredients. This book,' said she, opening it, 'though written by no Charlatan, contains a cure for all diseases. It exhibits not only general directions, but specified cases.' Turning over the leaves as she was speaking, she at length stopped, saying, 'here is your case, my dear, or rather your remedy.' She then read very deliberately—'COMMUNE WITH YOUR OWN HEART—AND IN YOUR CHAMBER—AND BE STILL.'

'"I now found her grand receipt-book was the Bible. I arose and embraced her. 'My dear aunt,' said I, 'do with me whatever you please. I will be all obedience. I pledge myself to take your alterative regularly, constantly. Do not spare me. Speak your whole mind.'

'"My dear Matilda,' said she, 'ever since your marriage, your life has been one continued opposition to your feelings. You have lived as much below your understanding as your principles. Your conduct has been a system of contradictions. You have believed in Christianity, and acted in direct violation of its precepts. You knew that there was a day of future reckoning, and yet neglected to prepare for it. With a heart full of tenderness, you have been guilty of repeated acts of cruelty. You have been faithful to your husband, without making him respectable or happy. You have been virtuous, without the reputation or the peace which belongs to virtue. You have been charitable without doing good, and affectionate without having ever made a friend. You have wasted those attentions on the worthless, which the worthy would have delighted to receive, and those talents on the frivolous, which would have been cherished by the enlightened. You have defeated the use of a fine understanding by the want of common prudence, and robbed society of the example of your good qualities by your total inability to resist and oppose. Inconsideration and vanity have been the joint cause of your malady. At your age, I trust it is not incurable. As you have caught it by keeping infected company, there is no possible mode of cure, but by avoiding the contagious air they breathe. You have performed your quarantine with admirable patience. Beware my dearest neice, of returning to the scene where the plague rages, till your antidote has taken its full effect.'

'"I will *never* return to it, my dear Lady Jane,' cried I, throwing myself into her arms. 'I do not mean that I will never return to town. My duty to my lord requires me to be where he is, or where he wishes me to be. My residence will be the same, but my society will be changed.'

'"You please me entirely,' replied she.—'In resorting to religion, take care that you do not dishonour it. Never plead your piety to God as an apology for your neglect of the relative duties. If the one is soundly adopted the other will be correctly performed.—There are those who would delight to throw such a stigma on real Christianity, as to be able to report that it had extinguished your affections, and soured your temper. Disappoint them, my sweet niece; while you serve your Maker more fervently, you must be still more patient with your husband. But while you bear with his faults, take care you do not connive at them. If you are in earnest, you must expect some trials. He who prepares these trials for you will support you under them, will carry you through them, will make them instruments of his glory, and of your own eternal happiness.'

'"Lord Melbury's complaisance to my wishes,' replied I, 'has been unbounded.—As he never controlled my actions, when they required control, I trust he will be equally indulgent now they will be less censurable. Alas! we have too little interfered with each other's concerns—we have lived too much asunder—who knows but I may recall him?' My tears would not let me go on—nor will they now,' added she, wiping her fine eyes.

'Sir John and I were too much touched to attempt to answer her; at length she proceeded.

'"By adhering to Lady Jane's directions, I have begun to get acquainted with my own heart. Little did I suspect the evil that was in it. Yet I am led to believe that the incessant whirl in which I have lived, my total want of leisure for reflection, my excessive vanity, and complete inconsiderateness, are of themselves causes adequate to any effects which the grossest vices would have produced.

'"Last week my lord made us a visit at the

Castle. I gave him a warm reception; but he seemed rather surprised at the cold one which I gave to a large cargo of new French novels and German plays, which he had been so good as to bring me. I did not venture to tell him that I had changed my course of study. Lady Jane charged me to avoid giving him the least disgust by any unusual gravity in my looks or severity in my conversation. I exerted myself to such good purpose, that he declared he wanted neither cards nor company. I tried to let him see, by my change of habits, rather than by dry documents, or cold remonstrances, the alteration which had taken place in my sentiments. He was pleased to see me blooming and cheerful. We walked together, we read together; we became lovers and companions. He told Lady Jane he never saw me so pleasant. He did not know I was so agreeable a woman, and was glad he had had this opportunity of getting acquainted with me. As he has great expectations from her, he was delighted at the friendship which subsisted between us.

'"He brought us up to town. As it was now empty, the terrors of the masquerade no longer hung over me, and I cheerfully complied with his wishes. I drove immediately to Mrs. Stokes's with such a portion of my debt, as my retirement had enabled me to save. I feasted all the way on the joy I should have in surprising her with this two hundred pounds. How severe, but how just was my punishment, when on knocking at the door I found that she had been dead these two months! No one could tell me what was become of her daughter. This shock operated almost as powerfully on my feelings as the first had done. But if it augmented my self-reproach, it confirmed my good resolutions. My present concern is, how to discover the sweet girl whom, alas, I have helped to deprive of both her parents."

'Here I interrupted her,' continued Lady Belfield, saying, 'You have not far to seek, Fanny Stokes is in this house. She is appointed governess to our children.'

'Poor Lady Melbury's joy was excessive at this intelligence, and she proceeded: "That a too sudden return to the world might not weaken my better purposes, I was preparing to request my lord's permission to go back to the castle, when he prevented me by telling me that he had an earnest desire to make a visit to the brave patriots in Spain, and to pass the winter among them, but feared he must give it up, as the state of the continent rendered it impossible for me to accompany him.

'"This filled my heart with joy. I encouraged him to make a voyage, assured him I would live under Lady Jane's observation, and that I would pass the whole winter in the country."

'"Then you shall pass it with us at Beechwood, my dear Lady Melbury," cried Sir John and I, both at once, "we will strengthen each other in every virtuous purpose. We shall rejoice in Lady Jane's company."

'She joyfully accepted the proposal, not doubting her Lord's consent; and kindly said, that she should be doubly happy in a society, at once so rational and so elegant.

'It was settled that she should spend with us the three months that Fanny Stokes and little Caroline are to pass at Stanley Grove. She desired to see Fanny, to whom she behaved with great tenderness. She paid her the two hundred pounds, assuring her she had no doubt of being able to discharge the whole debt in the spring.

'I received a note from her the next day, informing me of her lord's cheerful concurrence, as well as that of Lady Jane. She added, that when she went up to dress she had found on her toilette her diamond necklace, which her dear aunt had redeemed and restored to her, as a proof of her confidence and affection. As Lady Melbury has for ever abolished her coterie, I have the most sanguine hope of her preseverance. All her promises would have gone for nothing, without this practical pledge of her sincerity.'

When Lady Belfield had finished her little tale, I expressed, in the strongest terms, the delight I felt at the happy change in this charming woman. I could not forbear observing to Sir John, that as Lady Melbury had been the 'glass of fashion,' while her conduct was wrong, I hoped she would not lose all her influence by its becoming right. I added, with a smile, 'in that case, I shall rejoice to see the fine ladies turn their talent for drawing to the same moral account with this fair penitent. Such a record of their faults as she has had the courage to make of hers, hanging in their closets, and perpetually staring them in the face, would be no unlikely means to prevent a repetition, especially if the picture is to be visible as the fault had been.'

CHAP. XLIX.

THE next morning I resumed my journey northwards, and on the fourth day I reached the seat of my ancestors. The distant view of the Priory excited strong but mingled emotions in my bosom. The tender sorrow for the loss of the beloved society I had once enjoyed under its roof, was a salutary check to the abundant joy arising from the anticipation of the blessings which awaited me there. My mind was divided between tho two conflicting sentiments, that I was soon to be in possession of every material for the highest happiness, and that the highest happiness is short! May I ever live under the influence of that act of devout gratitude, in which, as soon as I entered the house, I dedicated the whole of my future life to its divine Author, solemnly consecrating to his service, my time, my talents, my fortune; all I am and all I have!

I next wrote to Lucilla, with whom I continued to maintain a regular and animated correspondence. Her letters gratify my taste, and delight my heart, while they excite me to every thing that is good. This interchange of sentiment sheds a ray of brightness on a separation which every day is diminishing.

Mr. Stanley also has the goodness to write to me frequently. In one of my letters to him, I ventured to ask him how he had managed to produce in his daughter such complete satisfac

tion in his sober and correct habits of life; adding, that her conformity was so cheerful that it did not look so much like acquiescence as choice.

I received from Mr. Stanley the answer which follows.

Stanley Grove, Sept. 1808.

'My dear Charles,

'As I wish to put you in possession of whatever relates to the mind of Lucilla, I will devote this letter to answer your inquiries respecting her cheerful conformity to what you call our "sober habits of life;" and her indifference to those pleasures which are usually thought to constitute the sole happiness of young women of a certain rank.

Mrs. Stanley and I are not so unacquainted with human nature, as to have pretended to impose on her understanding, by attempting to breed her up in entire ignorance of the world, or in perfect seclusion from it. She often accompanied us to town for a short time. The occasional sight of London, and the frequent enjoyment of the best society, dissipated the illusion of fancy. The bright colours with which young imagination, inflamed by ignorance, report, and curiosity, invests unknown and distant objects, faded under actual observation. Complete ignorance and complete seclusion form no security from the dangers incident to the world, or for correct conduct at a distance from it. Ignorance may be the safety of an idiot, and seclusion the security of a nun. Christian parents should act on a more large and liberal principle, or what is the use of observation and experience? The French women of fashion, under the old regime, were bred in convents, and what women were ever more licentious than many of them, as soon as marriage had set them at liberty?

'I am persuaded that the best-intended formation of character, if formed on ignorance and deceit, will never answer. As to Lucilla, we have never attempted to blind her judgment. We have never thought it necessary to leave her understanding out of the question, while we were forming her heart. We have never told her that the world is a scene absolutely destitute of pleasure: we have never assured her that there is no amusement in the diversion which we disapprove. Even if this assurance had not been deceitful, it would have been vain and fruitless. We cannot totally separate her from the society of those who frequent them, and whom she would hear speak of them with rapture.

'We went upon other grounds. We accustomed her to reflect that she was an intellectual creature; that she was an immortal creature; that she was a Christian.—That to an intellectual being, diversions must always be subordinate to the exercise of the mental faculties; that to an immortal being, born to higher hopes than enjoyments, the exercise of the mental faculties must be subservient to religious duties. That in the practice of a Christian, self-denial is the turning point, the specific distinction. That as to many of the pleasures which the world pursues, Christianity requires her votaries to live above the temptations which they hold out. She requires it the more especially, because Christians in our time, not being called upon to make great and trying sacrifices, of life, of fortune, and liberty; and having but comparatively small occasions to evidence their sincerity, should the more cheerfully make the petty but daily renunciation of those pleasures which are the very element in which worldly people exist.

'We have not misled her by unfair and flattering representations of the Christian life. We have not, with a view to allure her to embrace it on false pretences, taught her that when religion is once rooted in the heart, the remainder of life is uninterrupted peace and unbroken delight; that all shall be perpetually smooth hereafter, because it is smooth at present. This would be as unfair as to show a raw recruit the splendours of a parade-day, and tell him it was actual service. We have not made her believe that the established Christian has no troubles to expect, no vexations to fear, no storms to encounter. We have not attempted to cheat her into religion, by concealing its difficulties, its trials, no, nor its unpopularity.

'We have been always aware, that to have enforced the most exalted Christian principles, together with the necessity of a corresponding practice, ever so often and so strongly, would have been worse than foolish, had we been impresssing these truths one part of the day, and had, on the other part, been living ourselves in the actual enjoyment of the very things against which we were guarding her. My dear Charles, if we would talk to young people with effect, we must, by the habits of which we set them the example, dispose them to listen, or our documents will be something worse than fruitless. It is really hard upon poor girls to be tantalized with religious lectures, while they are at the same time tempted to every thing against which they are warned; while the whole bent and bias of the family practice are diametrically opposite to the principles inculcated.

'In our own case I think I may venture to affirm, that the plan has answered. We endeavoured to establish a principle of right, instead of unprofitable invective against what was wrong Perhaps there can scarcely be found a religious family in which so few anathemas have been denounced against this or that specific diversion, as in ours. We aimed to take another road. The turn of mind, the tendency of the employment, the force of the practice, the bent of the conversation, the spirit of the amusement, have all leaned to the contrary direction, till the habits are gradually worked into a kind of nature. It would be cruel to condemn a creature to a retired life without qualifying her for retirement: next to religion, nothing can possibly do this but mental cultivation who are above the exercise of vulgar employments. The girl who possesses only the worldly acquirements—the singer and the dancer—when condemned to retirement, may reasonably exclaim with Milton's Adam, when looking at the constellations,

> Why all night long shine these?
> Wherefore, if none *behold*.

'Now the woman who derives her principles from the Bible, and her amusements from intellectual sources, from the beauties of nature, and from active employment and exercise, will

not part for *beholders*. She is no clamorous beggar for the extorted alms of admiration. She lives on her own stock. Her resources are within herself. She possesses the truest independence. She does not wait for the opinion of the world, to know if she is right; nor for the applause of the world, to know if she is happy.

'Too many religious people fancy that the infectious air of the world is confined to the ball-room, or the play-house, and that when you have escaped from these, you are got out of the reach of its contagion. But the contagion follows wherever there is a human heart left to its own natural impulse. And though I allow that places and circumstances greatly contribute to augment or diminish the evil; and that a prudent Christian will always avoid an atmosphere which he thinks not quite wholesome; yet, whoever lives in the close examination of his own heart, will still find some of the morbid mischief clinging to it, which will require constant watching, whatever be his climate or his company.

'I have known pious persons, who would on no account allow their children to attend places of gay resort, who were yet little solicitous to extinguish the spirit which these places are calculated to generate and nourish. This is rather a geographical than a moral distinction. It is thinking more of the place than of the temper. They restrain their persons, but are not careful to expel from their hearts the dispositions which excite the appetite, and form the very essence of danger. A young creature cannot be happy who spends her time at home in amusements destined for exhibition, while she is forbidden to be exhibited.

'But while we are teaching them that Christianity involves an heroic self-denial; that it requires some things to be done, and others to be sacrificed, at which mere people of the world revolt; that it directs us ro renounce some pursuits because they are wrong, and others because they are trifling—we should, at the same time, let them see and feel, that to a Christian the region of enjoyment is not so narrow and circumscribed, is not so barren and unproductive, nor the pleasures it produces so few and small, as the enemies of religion would insinuate. While early habits of self-denial are giving firmness to the character, strengthening the texture of the mind, and hardening it against ordinary temptations—the pleasures and the employments which we substitute in the stead of those we banish, must be such as tend to raise the taste, to invigorate the intellect, to exalt the nature, and enlarge the sphere of enjoyment, to give a tone to the mind, and an elevation to the sentiments, which shall really reduce to insignificance the pleasures that are prohibited.

'In our own instance I humbly trust, that through the divine blessing, perseverance has been its own reward. As to Lucilla, I firmly believe that right habits are now so rooted, and the relish of superior pleasures so established in her mind, that had she the whole range of human enjoyment at her command; had she no higher consideration, no fear of God, no obedience to her mother and me, which forbade the ordinary dissipations, she would voluntarily renounce them, from a full persuasion of their empty, worthless, unsatisfying nature, and from a superinduced taste for higher gratifications.

'I am as far from intending to represent my daughter as a faultless creature, as she herself is from wishing to be so represented. She is deeply conscious both of the corruption of her nature, and the deficiencies of her life. This consciousness I trust will continue to stimulate her vigilance, without which all religion will decline, and to maintain her humility, without which all religion is vain!

'My dear Charles! a rational scene of felicity lies open before you both. It is lawful to rejoice in the fair perspective, but it is safe to rejoice with trembling. Do not abandon yourself to the chimerical hope that life will be to you what it has never yet been to any man—a scene of unmingled delight. This life so bright in prospect, will have its sorrows. This life which at four and twenty seems to stretch itself to an indefinite length, will have an end. May its sorrows correct its illusions! May its close be the entrance on a life which shall have no sorrows and no end.

'I will not say how frequently we talk of you, nor how much we miss you. Need I tell you that the person who says least on the subject, is not the one who least feels your absence? She writes by this post.

'Adieu, my dear Charles! I am with great truth your attached friend, and hope before Christmas to subscribe myself your affectionate father,

'FRANCIS STANLEY'

* * * * *

Delightful hope! as Miss Stanley, when that blessed event takes place, will resign her name, I shall resume mine, and joyfully forever renounce that of

CŒLEBS.

MORAL SKETCHES

OF PREVAILING OPINIONS AND MANNERS,

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC:

WITH REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER.

Let us make a stand on the ancient ways, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and walk in it.—*Lord Bacon on Innovation.*

I know not which is the greater wonder, either that prayer, which is a duty so easy and facile, so ready and adapted to the powers and skill and opportunities of every man, should have so great effects and be productive of such mighty blessings; or that we should be so unwilling to use so easy an instrument of producing so much good.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

PREFACE.

It is with the sincerest satisfaction, and the most lively gratitude to God, that the writer of these pages is enabled to bear her feeble but heartfelt testimony, to the progress which religion has made, and is making, amongst us, especially in the higher, and even the highest ranks of society.

At a period, therefore, abounding and advancing in almost every kind of religious improvement, she may be thought by those who would be looking for congratulation rather than caution, to have imposed on herself an invidious task, in choosing to dwell less on the triumphs of Christianity, than on the dangers or the errors of some of its professors. Yet she is persuaded that they who have made the greatest proficiency in piety, will be the most ready to forgive the intimations, of which they stand in the least need.

It may, however, justly be said, that the writer might have found more appropriate objects of censure amongst the worldly and the irreligious, than in the more respectable classes whom she has taken the liberty to make the subject of animadversion. But the truth is, the thoughtless and the profligate have been so successively and so perseveringly attacked by far more powerful pens; have been so long assailed by the monitory maxims of the moralist, pelted by the missile weapons of the satirist, and chastised by the grave rebuke of the divine, that, with due deference, she turns over the hitherto incorrigible to stronger and more efficient hands; while she ventures to address her observations to other quarters, where there will be more hope of forgiveness, and less despair of success.

She does not therefore appeal to those who "hear not Moses and the Prophets," but rather to those, who, in some awful instances, misrepresent them. She presumes, with respect and diffidence, to expostulate with some, who, though exempt from palpable defects in practice, yet require to be reminded that speculative errors cannot be indulged without danger; and to intimate to others, that the practice may be faulty where there are no material errors in the creed. Doubtless indifference to religion will hereafter be more severely judged, than mistakes in it, especially if the latter be found to proceed from the head, as the other more apparently does from the heart.

The remarks in the early part of these Sketches, on the excess of continental intercourse, will probably be accused of blameable scrupulosity, and the writer be charged with unnecessary rigour. Yet what enlightened conscience will deny that some of the habits to which allusion is made, militate as much against the self-denying spirit of our religion as more ostensible faults. They would not, however, have been noticed, had they been confined to trifling and common characters; but the least error that grows into a habit, and that habit sanctioned by the countenance of the worthy and respectable, becomes more important than even the vices of ordinary men or frivolous women. In lamenting the probable injurious consequences to a large proportion of the myriads, who are still with unabated eagerness, crowding to a foreign shore, the author is fully persuaded that many amongst them carry out principles too deeply rooted, to be shaken by unprofitable intercourse, and morals too correct to be infected by the fascinations of pleasure. But who will deny that the countenance of those who escape the injury gives an authority to those who receive it? In this view, the wisest and most correct of our emigrants, may, by lending themselves to the practice, furnish in the result, an apology for things which they themselves disapprove, and thus their example may be pleaded, as favouring what they would be amongst the last to tolerate.

That long and frequent absences from our home, and especially from our country, are not favourable to the mind, is but too visible in that spirit of restlessness induced, by so many who have *repeatedly* made the experiment. For it is observable that the desire once indulged, instead of being cooled, is inflamed; inclination becomes voracity. Appetite has grown with indulgence. And is it not to be feared that the sober scenes of domestic, and especially of rural life, will continue to appear more and more insipid in proportion to the frequency with which they are deserted? Will not successive and protracted carnivals convert the quiet scenes of home enjoyment into what the poet calls "a lenten entertainment?"

Home is at once the scene of repose and of activity. A country gentleman of rank and fortune is the sun of a little system, the movements of which his influence controls. It is at home that he feels his real importance, his usefulness and his dignity. Each diminishes in proportion to the distance he wanders from his proper orbit. The old English gentry kept up the reverence and secured the attachment of their dependents by living among them. Personal affection was maintained by the presence of the benefactor. Subordination had a visible head. Whereas obedience to a master they do not see, savours too much of allegiance to a foreign power.

We know that the Roman hero who transgressed the boundaries of his own province by *once* crossing the Rubicon, changed the whole condition, circumstances, constitution and character

of his country. May not the reiterated passage of the Straits of Dover eventually produce moral changes not less important?

The mischiefs effected by these incessant migrations may, indeed, be slow, but they are progressive. Principles which would revolt at the idea of any sudden change, are melted down by the gradual relaxation of continued contact. Complacency in the soothing enjoyment creeps on by almost imperceptible advances. The revolution is not the less certain, because it is not acknowledged. The conscience, too, is quieted by the geographical anodyne—"I would not do in England what I think it no harm to do in Paris.'

Might not a fair practical appeal be made to the different state of the feelings of many of our travellers, on witnessing the open violation of the sanctity of the *first* Sunday, and the *twentieth* repetition of the same abuse? Who can affirm, that familiarity has not gradually diminished the alarm, and in a good measure suppressed the indignation? Who will assert, that this succession of desecrated sabbaths has produced no alteration in the state of their feelings, except that of reconciling them to the practice. They, indeed, who had made such a proficiency in religion as to maintain an unabated sense of the evil, would be the least likely unnecessarily to expose their principles to such a risk.*

For the bold remarks on this dangerous and delicate subject, the culprit throws herself on the mercy, and the Anglicism of her readers; on the courtesy of those, whose kindness she hopes will not be forfeited, by her having shown herself too exclusively an English woman. Anxious, perhaps to a fault, for the welfare, the honour, the prosperity, the character of this Queen of Islands, she yet believes that there are to be found worse prejudices than those national attachments, which in her are irreclaimable.†

It is not, however, to be conceded, that the term *prejudice*, so frequently applied to these attachments, is, by this application, legitimately used. If prejudice, in its true definition, signifies prepossession, judgment formed beforehand, fondness adopted previously to knowledge, notions cherished without inquiry, opinions taken up, and acted upon without examination,—if these be its real significations, and what lexicographer will deny that they are? then how can this term be applied to the more enlightened Britons? How can it be applied to men who, independently of the natural fondness for the soil, and all the objects which endear it; who, in addition to this attachment, feel, acknowledge, and enjoy, in their native country, all the substantial blessings which make life worth living for; a constitution, the best that mortal man has ever yet devised; a religion, above the powers of man indeed to conceive, but reformed and carried to perfection by his agency, taught by the wisdom of God, led by the guidance of his word, and the direction of his Spirit. A system of religious liberty, which, while certain miscreants at home are labouring to destroy under the pretence of improving, some foreign countries are imitating, and all are envying. Institutions, which promise to convey the chief of these blessings to the remotest lands;—if all these assertions are true, let it be again asked, whether, if an intimate knowledge, and a long enjoyment of these blessings, should have produced a filial fondness for such a country, that attachment can be denominated *prejudice*, a word which, let it be repeated, was only meant to express blind zeal, neglected examination, and contented ignorance?

May not this growing attachment for foreign manners, by wearing out domestic attachments, create a powerful preponderance in the opposite scale? The English partialities being cured, may not those who shall have conquered them, become more satisfied with their acquired, than their former tastes; may they not fancy, that they are grown more candid, when perhaps, they are only become less conscientious? When the mind is softened down by pleasurable sensations, pleased with every thing about it, it becomes pleased with itself; begins to look back on its former scrupulous character with present triumph, rejoices in its enlargement from its previous narrowness congratulates itself on its acquired liberality, calls what was firmness, bigotry; and thus to the altered character, the strictness it carried abroad, appears rigour on its return home!

That the attraction may be inviting, and the temptation considerable, is readily allowed; but if once the rightness of an action should come to be determined by its pleasantness, an entirely new system of morals must be introduced amongst Christians; the question then would be no longer, what *ought* we to do, but what should we *like* to do? That the temptation is not irresistible, appears in the self-denial of those who continue to withstand it: many who have felt the desire have prudently deferred its gratification to a safer season; while others continue to doubt its *general* expediency.

That many among our innumerable travellers, have gone abroad on the reasonable ground of health, as well as for the necessary purposes of business, is not to be doubted. And who will deny that some men of great ability and high principle, have gone with the meritorious desire, of doing moral and religious good, in various directions; and that they have, in no inconsiderable degree effected it, or at least have opened a door for further improvement? On the other hand one disgraceful truth must not be concealed, that others have carried out more evil from home, than they found abroad.

It would be uncharitable and unchristian, to desire to maintain a spirit of hostility between

* Some friends of the writer, men of the first respectability, who during the late war commanded volunteer corps, have acknowledged to her, that when first called out to drill on Sundays, their religious feelings were most painfully wounded, but by long habit, it gradually became a matter of indifference to them.

† These prefatory apologies for the offences of a subsequent chapter, will, it is to be feared, remind the reader of the prudent sinner mentioned by Luther, who in going to purchase indulgences for the faults he had *already* committed, purchased another for a fault he *intended* to commit.

near neighbours; but when neighbours have been so frequently on the alert to find pretences for disagreement, and national safety has sometimes been endangered by the quarrels of individuals, will not good neighbourhood be more probably promoted by friendly dispositions and mutual good offices on the respective shores, than by obtrusive visits, which, if they were thoroughly liked, would doubtless be more frequently returned?

For is it not worthy of remark, that we not only refuse to imitate our continental neighbours, in the very point in which they are really respectable? *They stay at home.* Even if they do so with the same proud self-preference, which made ancient Rome call all the other nations of the world barbarians, it is at least an honest and a patriotic partiality. Would not the natives of our happy land who have less to gain, and more to lose, do well to follow their example in this honourable instance? *They* prudently augment the resources of their country in two ways, by spending their own money in their own land, with the additional profit of holding out to us those allurements, which cause ours to be spent there also.

O England! model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart!
What might'st thou do that honour bids thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural!
But see, thy fault France hath in thee found out.

SHAKSPEARE.

While the pen is in the hand of the writer, fresh intelligence is brought of conspiracies forming in different parts of the kingdom for its destruction. Can she, therefore, forbear repeating, that if her degenerate sons betray her, and her honourable sons desert her, her perils are indeed imminent?

At her advanced age the writer has little to hope from praise, or little to fear from censure, except as her views may have been in a right or wrong direction. She has felt that a renewed attention to growing errors is a duty on those who have the good of mankind at heart. The more nearly her time approaches for her leaving the world, there is a sense in which she feels herself more strongly interested in it; she means an increasing anxiety for its improvement; for its advance in all that is right in principle, and virtuous in action. And as the events and experience of every day convince her, that there is no true virtue that is not founded in religion, and no true religion which is not maintained by PRAYER, she hopes to be forgiven, if with declining years and faculties, yet with increasing earnestness, from increasing conviction of its value, she once more ventures to impress this last, important topic, on their attention.

If then she has enlarged even to diffuseness on the subject of prayer, it is because she is fervently desirous to suggest it, as the surest counteractive of those many abberrations of heart and practice but too visible amongst us. In some former publications, however, she had expatiated so largely on this inexhaustible topic, that, in order to avoid repetition, she has chiefly limited her present observations on prayer to the errors which may prevent its efficacy, together with the allusions to certain classes of character in whom these errors most abound.

In taking her final leave of her readers, may she be allowed to express her gratitude for their long unwearied indulgence; for a patience which the too frequent demands on it could not exhaust; for their candour in forgiving her bold remonstrances; for their kindness in bearing with her faults in consideration of her desire to be useful; and for extending to one who had nothing to offer but right intentions, that favour to which merit might have put in a fairer claim.

Barley-Wood, July 24th, 1819.

SKETCHES OF FOREIGN MANNERS.

Foreign Associations.

WE had fervently hoped, during a war unparalleled in duration and severity, that if ever the blessing of peace should be restored, all would be well again: we had hoped, that at least we should be brought back to our previous situation with that improvement in humility and gratitude, which the remembrance of past sufferings, and recent deliverance from those sufferings, would seem naturally to produce. If our pleasant feelings in such a prospective event were shaded at all, it was simply by the irrepairable and individual loss of a father, son, or brother, which almost every family, of every rank, had sustained. Peace was at length providentially granted to our arms and to our prayers; but all the blessings we had anticipated did not return in her train:

Ease still recants
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

Were it not almost doubtful whether in some respects the change may have proved a benefit, if it should be found to be the choice between the two evils, the waste of human lives, or the decay of moral principles? Some scrupulous persons may even think it requires no very correct arithmetic to determine on the comparative value of perishable lives and immortal souls.

What then was the first use we made of a benefit so earnestly implored,—a blessing which we fondly flattered ourselves would be converted to so many salutary purposes? This peace, for

which so many prayers were offered, so many fasts appointed; this peace, whose return was celebrated by thanksgivings in every church, and, as we hope, in every house, and in every heart, to what purpose was its restoration devoted?

This peace was seized on, not as a means to repair in some measure the ravages which were made on the commerce, the property, the comforts, as well as the population of our country; but must it not, in many instances, be said truly, though most painfully said, to vary their nature, and enhance their malignity? Instead of sedulously employing it to raise us to our former situation, by a prudent restriction in our indulgences, an increased residence in our respective districts, and an endeavour to lighten the difficulties of government, by the continued contribution of its rightful supplies; instead of using it to mitigate the distresses, and to restrain the crimes of the lower orders, by living in the midst of them, each at its natural and appropriate station, and thus neutralising the spirit of disaffection, which took advantage only of their absence to break out; instead of improving its opportunities, or providing against the impending scarcity, which the desertion of the rich increased almost to famine, in giving employment to the industrious, relief to the sick, and bread to the famished; instead of each sentinel remaining at his providentially appointed watch,—at this critical moment, a very large proportion of our nobles and gentry, an indefinite number of our laity, and not a few of our clergy, that important part of the community, of which the situation is peculiarly local,—all these, as if simultaneously seized by that mania which, in fabulous history, is said to have sent *one* unfortunate object of divine persecution wandering through the world,—all these important portions of our country at once abandoned it. The only use they made of peace was to fly, with most unrighteous speed, to the authors of our calamities, and of such calamities as it might be thought could not at once have been forgotten, to visit a country which had filled our own with widows and orphans, which had made the rest of Europe a scene of desolation.

Not only hundreds of thousands of our country, men, and women, and children, but millions of our money, so severely wanted at home, were transported from every port to visit this lately execrated country. To *visit*, did I say? that had been little; a short excursion to feed the eye, and gratify the taste with pictures and statues, might have been pleaded as a natural temptation.

Here we conceive the grave Christian moralist will censure the writer as much as she censures the emigrants. He will say, 'the desire is too natural to be right.' If we plead in mitigation of damages, that it was innocent curiosity, we shall be told, that it was a curiosity, which one of our first parents believed innocent, but which lost them both Paradise. If it was a desire of knowledge, it might be a knowledge better unknown; if to cure those prejudices, 'for which our country is a name so dear,' such prejudices may better be retained than cured.

But be this as it may, the truth is, that to multitudes, France was not made a place of visit but a home. For when these wonderful productions of art were restored to the places from whence they had been feloniously taken, did that allay the hunger of emigration? France became the settled residence of multitudes. France was made a scene for the education of English, of Christian, of Protestant children! Sons and daughters, even in the middle ranks of life, were transported thither with an eagerness, as if the land of blood had been a land of promise. And as all fashions descend, not a few of our once simple, plain-hearted English yeomen were drawn in to follow the example of *their betters*, as they are not very correctly called. The infection became general, nor has time as yet stayed the plague.

A late French wit,* who always preferred a calumny to a fact, and was more fond of giving a neat turn to a sentence, than of speaking truth, after visiting this country about the middle of the last century, characterised its natives by saying, the English people resembled their own beer, the top was all froth, the bottom all dregs, but the middle was excellent. If this were at that time true, the middle class has now merged its distinctive character in the other two; it is abandoning the honourable station in the cup which it then held, is adopting its worst ingredients from above and below, and by its mixture with the froth and the feculence, has considerably lessened its claim to its once distinct commendation.†

But the evil, great as it is, does not end here; numbers of a higher strain remain domiciliated in France, and too many who are returned, are more than ever assimilated with French manners. It is to be feared, that with French habits, French principles may be imported. French alliances are contracted, as almost every newspaper records. We are losing our national character. The deterioration is by many thought already visible. In a few years, if things proceed in their present course, or rather with increasing velocity, which is always the case with downward tendencies, the strong and discriminating features of the English heart and mind will be obliterated, and we shall be lost in the undistinguished mass.

In the mean time, let us take warning from the consideration, that the first stage of decline is the beginning of dissolution. Whatever has begun already to decay, is not far from perishing. This contagious intercourse has been too probably the cause of the recent multiplication of those great Sunday entertainments, in the diminution of which we had begun to rejoice; a multiplication which is as likely to contribute to the decline of religion in the domestic arrangements of the great, as in any more obvious and ostensible evil.

What would the veteran moralist, who, in his beautiful and vigorous satire, indignantly exclaimed,

* Voltaire.

† It is almost too ludicrous to assert, that the wife of a reputable farmer, being asked lately what she had done with her daughter, replied, 'I have *Frenched* her and *musicked* her, and shall now carry her to France.

I cannot bear a French motropolis;

What would Johnson have said had he been spared till now?

How would he laugh at Britain's modern tribe,
Dart the keen taunt, and edge the piercing gibe!

How would he have poured out his ready wrath, his cutting sarcasm, his powerful reasoning, his robust morality, on a country which is in danger of deserting its own character, impairing its own virtue, and discrediting its own religion?

We set a just value on the French language as the introduction to much elegant literature; to much indeed that is valuable, but to more that is pernicious. But even this agreeable language, for the higher acquisition of which so many important sacrifices are made, so much domestic duty is relinquished, so much religious principle is hazarded, may be bought too dear. Even if this supreme excellence, the perfection of the Parisian accent, *should* obtain for an English lady the coveted distinction of being taken for a French woman; does she not run some risk, even in her own country and her own home, from the habit of domesticating in our families persons of whom all she may know is, that their accent is good; of whose morals she knows little; and of whose religion she knows nothing, except that, if they happen by great chance to have any, it is of a character hostile to her own. The only hope is, that the foreign teacher may care so little about the matter, as never to introduce religion at all; but this is not a very consoling consideration in the instructors of our children.

There is another grievance connected with this mania for whatever is foreign,—a grievance not the less serious because it is overlooked, and because it affects only a subordinate class in society; we allude to the injury sustained by our domestic manufactures from the abundant importation of French articles of dress and decoration. We forbear to enter on the subject in all its painful extent; we forbear to advert to the looms that are standing still, to the gloominess of our trading streets, to the warehouses that are left solitary, to the shops which are nearly deserted; and shall confine our humble remonstrance to pleading more particularly the distress of those unfortunate females who used to procure a decent support by their own industry, and of whom thousands are now plunging into misery. We would fervently but respectfully advocate the cause of this meritorious and most pitiable class.

If British patriotism be not a plea sufficiently powerful to restrain a temptation, which can only be indulged by the violation of laws, which perhaps the husbands and fathers of the fair offenders have established, we would appeal to the sensibilities of a well-regulated heart, to the tenderness of an enlightened conscience, and to the dictates of justice and charity, whether it be pardonable to yield to every slight temptation merely to gratify vanity, or, to speak more tenderly, to indulge a capricious taste.

When tempted to make the alluring purchase by the superior beauty, real or imaginary, of the article, might we not presume to recommend to every lady to put some such questions as the following to herself:—'By this gratification, illicitly obtained, I not only offend against human laws, but against humanity itself; by this purchase I am perhaps starving some unfortunate young creature of my own sex, who gained her daily bread by weaving her lace or braiding her straw. I am driving her to that extremity of want, which may make her yield to the next temptation to vice, which may drive her to the first sinful means that may offer of procuring a scanty, precarious, and miserable support. It is in vain that I may have perhaps subscribed for her being taught better principles at school, that I have perhaps assisted in paying for her acquisition of her little trade, if by crushing that trade I now drive her to despair, if I throw her on a temptation which may overcome those better principles she acquired through my means. Shall I not then make this paltry—this no sacrifice? Shall I not obtain a victory over this petty allurement, whose consequences when I first gave way to it I did not perceive?"

The distress here described is not a picture drawn by the imagination, a touch of sentimentalism, to exhibit feeling and to excite it. It is a plain and simple representation of the state of multitudes of young women, who having been bred to no other means of gaining their support, will probably, if these fail throw themselves into the very jaws of destruction. Think, then, with tenderness, on these thousands of young persons of your own sex, whom a little self-denial on your part might restore to comfort—might snatch from ruin. Many ladies, who make these unlawful purchases, do not want feeling, they only want consideration. Consider, then, we once more beseech you, consider, that it is not merely their bread, but their virtue, of which you may be unintentionally depriving them; and you will find, that your error is by no means so inconsiderable as it may hitherto have appeared to you.

If the superiority of the foreign purchase you are about to make be not great, you have gained little or nothing by your fault; if it is, and you forego it, you have gained a victory over your own inclination,—the victory of an honest principle over a misleading fancy.

Spare yourself, then, the pain of feeling that, if you hear of any of these unfortunate beings having previously to their entering on other sinful courses, been tempted by famine to commit a robbery—spare yourself the pain of reflecting, that you, perhaps by a thoughtless gratification of your taste, first robbed her of that subsistence, the failure of which has driven her to a crime she abhorred. The evil which appeared little, considered by itself, considered in its possible consequences is of no small magnitude.

But to return.—It was from the land of polished arts that ancient Rome imported the poison of her sturdy morals, the annihilation of her masculine character. England has a palladium for her protection, which Ilium, which Rome never possessed. Yet on that guardian genius depended, as the people thought, the safety of the former; of the latter it was considered as the destiny. Our palladium is the CHRISTIAN, the PROTESTANT RELIGION. It cannot

be taken by storm; but like that of Ilium, it may be taken by stratagem. The French are to us as much more formidable than the Greeks were to Rome, as we have much more to lose. While our guardian genius remains inclosed within our wall, we shall be safe, in spite of wars and revolutions; if we neglect it, like the besieged city of antiquity, we fall: losing our religion, we lose all with it. Religion is our compass, the only instrument for directing and determining our course; and though it will not save the trouble of working the vessel, nor diminish the vigilance of guarding against rocks and shoals; yet it constantly points to that star which, by ascertaining our course, insures our safety.

In making our country an island, Divine Providence seems to have made a provision for our happiness as well as for our security. As that circumstance has protected us from the sword, it should also protect us from the manners of our continental neighbours. The more she labours to resume them, the more she will lose of her independent character. *Le gout du terroir* is often mentioned as the distinctive mark of the country which produces certain wines. The British character, we hope, will always retain its indigenous flavour.

But if Britain, blest by Heaven above all the nations, ancient or modern, recorded in the annals of history, sacred or profane, has not made the most of all the advantages bestowed on her; if she has not yet made the best use of that elevation, on which Divine Providence has placed her; if she has not yet applied to the best possible ends, the rich gifts with which he has endowed her; nor turned the provision made for her happiness to the best account: if, standing on the loftiest summit of naval, military, and literary glory; if favoured with the best civil and religious constitution the wit of man has yet devised;—if, with all these advantages, she has yet some steps to ascend before she reach to the height to which the Almighty seems to have destined her, let her remember, she has resources within himself, by which, with the blessing of Him who conferred them, she may still set an example to all the kingdoms of the earth. We will not say she may acquire a superiority over other nations—of that she has long been in possession—No; we must not try her by her comparative, but her positive merit: not by placing her in juxta-position with other countries, but with the possibilities of her own excellence.

Britain, we repeat, has abundant resources. If it be true that she has lately, in any respect, gone back, rather than advanced; if, when her public character has reached its zenith, her private character is in any thing deteriorated, she has still within herself all the materials of moral renovation; ample means, not only of recovering what has been lost, but of rising to heights yet unattained. It is only to be wished that she may use these resources, and consider them as raw materials, that will not produce their effect without being industriously worked up.

If the familiar and protracted intercourse with a neighbouring nation; if, during this intercourse, the long witnessed contempt of religion, morbid insensibility to morals, desecrated Sabbaths, an abandonment to amusements the most frivolous, to pleasures, knit in one eternal dance: if all this should happily have left unimpaired, or have only tinctured, too slightly to make a lasting impression, the noble simplicity, the ancient rectitude, the sound sense, and the native modesty which have long been the characteristics of the British people; if the growth at home, and within our own doors, of an intolerant and superstitious church, be not too fondly fostered—be not promoted instead of tolerated; if the paramount fondness, in the more delicate sex, for unbounded dissipation, for profane and immoral writers, should decline; if the middle classes among us should return to their ancient sobriety and domestic habits, should cease to vie with the great in expensive dress, and the decorations of high life, and to give their daughters the same useless accomplishments, which are carried too far even in the highest station, and in theirs are preposterous; if the instruction we are at length giving to the poor be as conscientiously conducted as it is generally adopted, and the art of reading be made the vehicle of true religion; if a judicious correction of our criminal code, and a prudent rectification of the demand of pauperism, be successfully followed up; if the African slave-trade should be effectually abolished—not in promise, and on paper, but in very deed and act; if our prisons be made places of reform, instead of increased corruption; if the young offenders be so instructed, that they come not out as bad as the old, and the old come not out worse than they went in; if our venerable universities should fulfil the promise they give of becoming as distinguished for moral discipline and strict religion, as they have ever been, and still are, unrivalled for learning and ability of every kind; if churches be as readily attended, as they will be cheerfully provided; if there be the same honourable attention paid to filling the pulpits, as to raising the buildings; if the Bible be as generally read by the giver, as it is liberally bestowed on the receiver; if the good old practice of family prayer should be revived, and public worship more carefully attended by those who give the law to fashion; if those who are 'the makers of manners' will adopt none but such as deserve to be imitated:—if all these improvements should take place, and which of them, let me ask, is impossible—then, though we laugh to scorn the preposterous notion of human perfectibility, we shall yet have a right to expect that England, so far from being satisfied to excel other nations, will not only excel her present self, but be continually advancing in the scale of Christian perfection.

French Opinion of English Society.

The French nation have lately had many opportunities for forming their opinion of the English. It may be worth our while to consider what opinion they *have* formed: since by ascertaining their present judgment of the English character, we may form some instructive conclusions as to the change their tuition is likely to effect in it.

Foreigners are of opinion that we want polish. If this were all, we should rather blame their discernment, or their deficiency in fair deduction. For grant us that we are solid, and we have high authority for saying that solid bodies take the brightest polish.—And if in point of fact the English character, like the English oak, be susceptible of no inconsiderable polish, it is owing in both to the inherent soundness and firmness of its substance. Soft bodies admit of little polish: in them, therefore, recourse is had to varnish, which hides all flaws; and the thicker it is applied, the more surely it conceals the meanness of the materials beneath its surface.

A late brilliant female writer,* whose genius it would be a reflection on our own taste not to admire, and on our own candour not to extol; has, towards the end of her admirable posthumous work, done, in general, noble justice to the English character. She had talents to appreciate, and opportunities to examine it, in its highest condition and most advantageous forms. It must be observed, that we here presume to touch on no part of her able delineation of English habits and manners, but only so far as private society and conversation are concerned. —On these points we are to look for her exceptions: though on the society of the gentlemen she animadverts with the most flattering consideration; and even to that of the ladies she makes a frequent and generous, but not very successful, effort to be civil.

However, with all the politeness and good nature of this fine writer, two qualities which she seems to have possessed in no ordinary degree, it frequently escapes her, that she found the English ladies deplorably deficient in those shining talents and airy graces which embellish society. Had her visit to London been three or four years later, she might possibly have found, in some quarters, stronger marks of improvement in this talent so near her heart; at least if any expectation might be formed from their subsequent intercourse with the society of Paris, the charms of which she never fails to exhibit in those glowing colours which she so well knows how to lay on, even on the worst ground.

But this eloquent panegyrist of animated conversation seems to be a little mistaken in some of the causes to which she ascribes the heaviness of London parties. She laments with deeper concern than the occasion, even had it been real, seems to require, that the great English gentlemen regularly retire, and spend nine months in the year on their estates in the country. We wish she had happened to mention in what quarter of the kingdom this annual retreat is made, where this voluntary exile *to* the native home is to be found.

We say voluntary, for Bristish gentlemen are not *relegues* from our capital, as ex-ministers and discarded favourites used to be from Paris. Neither the fate, nor the credit, nor the liberty, nor the choice of habitation of a man of rank in this country, depends on the favour of an arbitrary king; nor does his happiness, his general acceptance, nor his respectability, hang on the smiles of a despotic and capricious master. And if her concern be excessive for the annual voluntary banishment of our men of taste from the centre of social delights, which she would wish to see converted into a circle 'never ending, still beginning;' had this lady never further heard of such places as Bath, or Tunbridge, or Brighton, or any other of those numberless felicitous resources, those supplemental relaxations, those by-reliefs of the *ennui* of retreat, which always stand ready to intercept the speed of the fashionable exile, and to break the fall between the London and the country home?

But if even the fact were as desperate as she intimates, the self-imposed regulation would not be likely to produce the effect she deprecates. This lady, born herself to excel in polished society, regrets this injurious retreat, chiefly because it interrupts the brilliant intercourse of the metropolis, and causes conversation to suffer so tedious and melancholy a suspension. Now we should almost as soon have expected that a philosopher would have imagined a supernumerary eclipse of the sun for the same period, and then have brought it to account for the late dreariness of the natural world and the inclemency of the seasons.

She laments that the manner in which these absentees from the source and centre of intellectual enjoyment spend their time in the country, not a little disqualifies them for the charms of society. With all due deference to this able reasoner, from whom it is hazardous to differ, we should have really thought, that the long leisure for reading, to which this supposed solitude must be at least as favourable to some, as that indolence, sleeping, and drinking which she too indiscriminately ascribes to most, would have been generally seized on for the former purpose by men, who are all scholars by education, and frequently studious from taste.—Thus, instead of starving the intellect, would not this leisure rather serve to nourish it; and, instead of lowering the mind, furnish it with fresh images, enrich it with new ideas, and aided by the 'short retirement urging sweet return,' dispose it to repair with a full mind, additional spirit, replenished resources, and increased energy, to that more splendid society which she deems the life of life; that feast of intellect, of which the writer of these pages is fully disposed to acknowledge the pleasure and the profit?—Those to whom she alludes, who only hunt, and loll, and drink, and sleep at their country seats, are not, we presume, of that race of active intellect who would swell the flow of soul by their contributions, were they even tied as closely and constantly to the metropolis as the tavern waiter who draws their corks, or the more respectable purveyor who supplies the market with their luxuries.

As we presume that there is at this time at least as much genius, and taste, and literature, at home, as in any capital abroad, consequently there can be no deficiency of the finest materials for enriching and embellishing society, were their possessors a little more disposed to imitate a neighbouring nation in one talent, in which they must be allowed to excel all others—the talent *se faire valoir*.

There is more sterling weight than show in

* Madam de Stael.

the genuine English character; and Mr. Addison was not the only one of his countrymen who, with respect to intellectual wealth, could draw for a thousand pounds, though he may not always have a guinea in his pocket. But if they are incessantly producing all they are worth to every comer; when called out in public situations, in the senate, the pulpit, or at the bar, we see all the energies of genius in all its opulence and variety. We see the most powerful reasoning, adorned by the most persuasive eloquence. With these ample materials for conversation, they are not perhaps driven, like some of their more volatile neighbours, to talk for the sake of talking. Talking is not with Englishmen so completely a *besoin*, so entirely a natural necessity. They are more disposed to consider conversation as the refreshment than the pabulum of life. Added to this, their professional and laborious duties abroad, may make some of them frequently consider society as a scene in which rather to repose their minds, than to keep them in full exercise.

Learning in this country, is not confined to academicians, authors, and professional men. There is scarcely a man of fortune in the kingdom who, if he be not actually learned, has not, however, been bred to learning. The effect of that high institution, brought from the halls and bowers of our distinguished seats of learning, is generally diffused; it serves to fill and adorn the stations of dignity, honour, and utility of public, as well as to grace the shade and raise the tone of private life. So that an illiterate gentlemen is more rarely to be met with in this country, than in any other in the world. When a learned dignitary of our church enquired of one of the French emigrant clergy, who took refuge in England, if he understood Greek, he coolly replied, '*Monsieur, nous avons un professeur!*'

But to return to the other sex.—Our only fear on this subject is, lest they should not always remain what the writer in question represents them as being at present. If, indeed, we were only sent into this world to be entertaining; if we had nothing to do but to talk, nothing to aim at but to shine, nothing to covet but admiration; we should more readily coincide in opinion with this sprightly lady.

A great ancient has pronounced silence to be no unimportant art in society, and points, in a particular instance, at one man, as the wisest in an enlightened assembly, because he knew how to hold his tongue. If there had not been many discreet imitators of this taciturn orator in the London parties, what a diminution would it have been in the number of this lady's delighted auditors, and what a lessening of their own gratification in enjoying the exhibition of her superlative talents!

There are, indeed, very frequently sounder causes for being silent than deficiency of talent, or lack of information; and how happily would the multitude of idle talkers be diminished, if they never opened their mouths, but when they had something to say. The writer in question ascribes to causes which appear quite new, the reserve and insipidity of the English ladies, when she says, that the true motive is the fear of ridicule; and that as they are not called upon to enliven conversation, they are more struck with the danger of talking, than with the inconvenience of silence. She then somewhat unaccountably, goes on to attribute the frigidity of their society to the dread of newspapers; and conjectures, that because they do not delight in political warfare, they keep themselves back as much as possible in the presence of others. We did not know that English ladies were either so politieal or so discreet, or that vivacity and the graces were such heavy losers from these unsuspected causes. Perhaps this lady did not know that the English educate, or rather *did once* educate, women of fashion for *home*. A man of sense will desire to find in his domestic associate, good taste, general information, and a correct judgment. In the course of their literary pursuits and conversation together, he will take pleasure in refining and improving her mind; but he would not delight in a wife who will be always introducing subjects for debate, who will be always disputing the palm of victory. Competition and emulation do not contain the elements of domestic happiness. He married for a companion, not for a competitor. Rivalry is no great promoter of affection; nor does superiority in wit always confer superiority in happiness. A professed female wit, like a professed devotee to music, will be soon weary of wasting her talent on her husband; and even he, though he might like such an occasional display in a visit to the house of his friend, will find other talents wanting in a constant home companion: talents which will not only embellish, but improve society; qualities which will eclipse wit, and outlive beauty.

We do not find that those brilliant French women, who had spoiled this sprightly writer for English society, reserved their wit for the entertainment of their husbands, or their learning for the instruction of their families. Their most graceful ethic and courtly poet, who had the best opportunities of ascertaining the real value of professed wits in society, has given his estimate in a single line:

Diseurs de bon mots, fades caracteres!

Among other deductions from brilliant society in England, this lively writer laments an evil, which, if things proceed as they have now begun, we fear may not always remain a subject of lamentation, as coquetry is, in her recipe book, the flavour which gives to society its poignancy: and this zest she complains is not to be found in England, except in the unmarried! If, however, the growing imitation of French manners should hereafter add this new savour to the real accomplishments of English ladies, their fathers and husbands may not think it the most desirable finishing. She accounts for the fondness of our ladies for foreign travel in a manner not the most flattering to their purity, by supposing it to arise as much from the desire of escaping from the restraint on their manners, as from the influence of the fogs on their constitutions.

She is at no loss to know the true cause of a fact, which we are entirely indebted to her sagacity for discovering at all, namely, why *the dis*

gust of life seizes on those women who are confined to these inanimate societies. Certainly this explanation admits the following preliminary question,—Are the movers in these lifeless circles disgusted with their existence? By the the way, we do not quite understand whether by *le degout de la vie* she means a dislike to company, or a taste for suicide.

But let us do justice to her who has in most respects done ample justice to our country. If she is a little sickened with the moody taciturnity, and unassuming manners of our ladies, she graciously redeems their characters by making them a full allowance of the more solid virtues; acknowledges that sincerity and truth form the basis of their conversation, even where all the graces are wanting. It is somewhat doubtful, however, whether she would not willingly have relinquished the actual, in exchange for the absent qualities.

While we continue to preserve, or rather to improve in, this only true foundation of Christian intercourse, we will less regret the want of its embellishments; and while reserve is protection, and delicacy security, we will console ourselves under these minor evils, which are considered as so cruelly detracting from the fascinations of polished society.

Lord Chesterfield, who adorned conversation by his wit as much as he impaired it by his principles, has defined politeness 'to be the art of pleasing. Saint Paul, one of the few writers with whom this accomplished peer was not acquainted, recommends, with as much warmth as his lordship, the duty of pleasing our neighbour. But here the two moralists part. The noble writer would have us please others to benefit ourselves. All his precepts originate, proceed, and terminate in that one object—self. The Christian writer directs us to 'please others for their good,' their highest good, their moral 'edification.' The essence of the worldly code of ethics is selfishness; that of the Christian is disinterestedness.

There is a generosity in Christian intercourse, the very reverse of that little and narrowing spirit ascribed to it by those who do not know, or do not love it. It cannot be otherwise; for are not those who cultivate it ever the followers of Him, whose sublime characteristic it was—'that he pleased not himself?'

In the society of Christians, every man does not so much look on his own things as on the things of others. Christians do not make conversation a theatre for dispute or display. They consider it as a reciprocation of benignity; a desire to draw out the talents of those who, with more merit, have less pretension. An interchange of sentiment between intellectual and highly principled persons confers both pleasure and benefit. To make it at once pleasant and profitable, there must be an accordance of principle, if not of opinion. The conversation will frequently have a tincture of religion, even when the topic under discussion is not religious. Topics barely secular are susceptible of this spirit; and in pious and discreet hands, they will be treated in a way to promote religion without professing it.

True religion keeps the whole man in order whether he be engaged in business or in company. It sheds its benign influence far beyond its own sphere, and by a reflex light casts a ray on actions or speculations to which it has no immediate reference. The Christian does not go out of his way in search of wit, or embellishment, though he does not refuse them when they naturally present themselves, when they grow out of the subject, and the story is not invented for their forced introduction, nor any sacrifice made of something better than themselves. The Christian uses his talents temperately, seeks not to eclipse the less brilliant; and had much rather not shine at all, than shine at the expense of another. The religious man in society finds means for the exercise of many christian virtues without descanting on them,—candour, charitable construction, patience with the less enlightened, and temper with the less forbearing, a scrupulous veracity, an inviolable sincerity, a watchful guard against every vain thought and every light expression. He is careful to preserve wit unsullied, gayety pure, and vivacity correct. He is constantly on the watch to introduce subjects of a higher strain; when the occasion offers, he gladly embraces it, but with a due regard to time, place, and circumstance. Let it be observed, we are not here speaking of select society, associating for religious improvement, but of the duty of keeping ordinary conversation within the bounds and under the discipline of correct principle.

English Opinion of French Society.

It may at first sight be censured as a departure from the general design of these slight pages, to introduce any allusion to the manners of foreign countries, as exhibited in their own journals, memoirs, and letters. But when it is considered how deeply our own manners are now becoming assimilated with theirs, it may not be thought quite irrelevant to the subjects under consideration, to take a cursory view of the habits of society in a neighbouring metropolis, so far as they may be likely to affect and influence those of our own country, avoiding every thing public or political, or general, and confining the few cursory remarks to be made, to the fashionable circles of private society.

Paris has been long looked up to by many with admiration, as the centre of all that is brilliant in wit, or fascinating in conversation. In a capital, which before the Revolution was said to contain twenty thousand men of letters, high society was not likely to want eulogists. The extravagant encomiums bestowed on these societies by their own people, and echoed back by ours, may prevent its being thought inexpedient to give a superficial sketch of a few of the leading characters which seem to have set the superiority of the circles over which they presided above all competition. It is, we repeat, the apprehension that this boasted superiority may kindle undue admiration, and even excite envy, in the ardent and ingenuous mind of young persons of taste, who feel themselves precluded from the enjoyment, which must apologize for

the freedom, whilst it explains the motive, of these observations.

It is indeed wounding to delicacy to speak explicitly on things which should not be so much as named. Yet though it is painful to touch on such topics, how shall we be so likely to prevent evils, as by exposing them? Perhaps it may check the desire of imitation, lightly to touch on a few of the *bad characters* who preside over these *good societies.*

That many have escaped their pollution, is a thing more to inspire wonder than to excite imitation. All do not die of the plague where the plague rages; but the preservation of the few is no proof of the salubrity of the air, where so many have been infected.

In certain societies the difficulties of being witty is materially diminished by the readiness of the speaker to make any sacrifice, both to piety and modesty, to the good thing he is about to utter. While the feeling of that very sacrifice may perhaps give a keener relish to the pleasure of the profane hearer, the Christian, not inferior in talent, rejects in horror the reputation for wit to be obtained by any such sacrifice himself, and disdains to sanction or applaud it as the hearer of others.

Though the late sanguinary revolution in France overturned law, order, government, and religion; and had given a more emphatical character to crime of every description; yet if we take a cursory view of the period immediately preceding it, we shall see that this tremendous convulsion rather aggravated than introduced many of its moral corruptions. To be convinced of this, we need not travel so far back as the period which the natives consider as the *acme* of human glory—the age of *Louis Quatorze*, of Richelieu, and the Academy, the immortal Forty, as this academy had the modesty to call itself.

More sober thinkers are, however, of opinion, that what characterised that splendid reign, was unbounded extravagance, elegant profligacy, and tolerated debauchery. Surely these, which were its notorious distinctions, are practices which contribute little to the real grandeur of a country; unless, indeed, it can be proved that, according to the fearfully unguarded expression of the otherwise moral Burke, that the exhibition of vice in a better taste, by taking from it all its apparent grossness, takes away half of its real turpitude.

What arts of refinement could neutralise the evil, when all the bounds of moral restraint were so far broken through, as that the royal wife and the royal mistress were every where received with the same appearance of respect, when they were even met together in the same societies?

Louis has lately obtained, in certain quarters, a kind of resuscitation of his buried fame, by the only method perhaps by which it could have been raised,—a comparison with the prisoner of St. Helena. But surely to have committed fewer crimes than the man who has committed more than any other man, is not to have attained a very high degree in the scale of moral excellence. Are splendour in decoration and magnificence in expense a mantle broad enough to cover that injustice and those exactions on a plundered people by which they were purchased? The piety of the king's latter days is frequently thrown into the scale against the disorders of his earlier life. But surely the transition from profligacy to persecution is no great improvement in the human character. Were not his false virtues even more destructive than his avowed vices? Did matters take a better turn, when the monarch by exchanging gross immoralities for the exercise of a superstitious and intolerant religion, indulged himself and his directress in a long and bitter persecution of his own subjects? a persecution accompanied with every act of the most unrelenting cruelty. Exile, proscription, torture, death, were the rewards of four millions of his faithful protestant subjects! To these rigorous exercises of arbitrary power, he was encouraged and impelled by a woman who had herself been educated in the faith she now endeavours to exterminate. We pass over this intermediate government of 'the godless Regent trembling at a star,' in whose character, in addition to the most disgraceful vices, we see a shocking, but not uncommon union of the wildest superstition with the most avowed infidelity.

During the reign of the next equally corrupt successor, we have endless records of the state of society among persons in the higher walks life. These notices are to be found in a multitude of the letters and memoirs of the individuals who were themselves actors and interlocutors in these scenes of familiar life. These fashionable societies are all that come within our present designs. Many of those works have preserved the history of characters, principles, and sentiments, which had they been consigned to eternal oblivion, religion would have had less to mourn, and virtue less to regret.

Many of these writings, for life would be too short, and time ill spent to peruse them all, are adorned with elegancies of composition, and graces of style, which, had they been devoted to the purposes for which they were given, might have benefitted the world as much as they have injured it. Out of all these mischievous but lighter writings, we shall only mention one or two; nor would they have been noticed in a little work of this nature, but for the popularity they have obtained among us, and our dread of that natural progress, the tendency of admiration to produce imitation.

In the life of Marmontel, written by himself, we have an extraordinary specimen of decorous vice and accredited infamy—of abandoned manners, to which reference is frequently made, at least to the characters which exhibit them, without the slightest feeling of their turpitude. Vices abound and are revealed without the least apparent suspicion of their guilt. The intimations, indeed, are not repeated in the way of boasting, but look as if the writer did not think that concealment of the vice would raise the character he was eulogizing. If there are no offensive descriptions of vicious manners, it seems to be because they were not understood to be vicious; and if gayety of spirit seems to conceal from the writer the complexion of his own morals, gayety of style seems almost to make the reader lose sight of the character of

the company in which he is passing his time. In fact the delineation of those characters consists rather in a morbid insensibility to sin, than in an ambitious display of it. The slight veil thrown over corrupt manners by decency of expression, seems the effect of some remains, not of principle, but of good taste. It is the cold-bloodedness of a heart stagnated by long habits of impunity; for while the passions are inflamed by criminal indulgences, the sensibilities of the soul are chilled. The mind insensibly loses that delicacy of perception which nicely distinguishes not only the shades of evil, but the very existence of the distinction between vice and virtue. This deadness of principle, and livelinesss of language, it is which makes this writer, and others we could name, so peculiarly dangerous.

Women of fashion, of the very worst description, to whose parties the writer referred to was familiarly admitted, are named with unbounded admiration, not merely of their talents, but their virtues. The charms of their conversation, and the amiableness of their characters, are the theme of his unmixed panegyric. Incidentally, however, as a thing by the by, as a trifle not requiring to be named expressly, as a thing not invalidating any of their perfections, it comes out, that these women, so faultless and so panegyrised, are living in an illicit commerce with different men—men, whose wives are, with the same uncensurable guilt, carrying on similar connexions with the husbands of other women! Sobriety, chastity, the conjugal and maternal virtues, are not thought necessary to be called in to complete their round of perfection. Impurity of heart and life, derelietion of all the domestic duties, are never brought forward as any deduction from the all-atoning merit of graces of manner and vivacity of conversation.

Divine Providence seems to have intended advanced age as a season of repose, reflection, and preparation for death; and to have sent its infirmities, sufferings, and debility, as gracious intimations of our approaching change, and with a merciful view of our attaining by those remembrances, to the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

But one of the unhallowed projects on which these accomplished societies seem to have congratulated themselves, was in defeating this providential procedure. It was their boasted aim to cheat old age of itself—of its present inconveniences, its decays, and its prospective views, by a more amusing method. They contrived to divert the stage of infirmity into a scene of superinduced gayety and increased levity. Instead of desiring to invest it with the peaceful attributes of calmness and resignation, they invented the means of making old age lose itself, as it were, in youthful images, not only by indulging in light reading, but loose composition. One of them was so successfully boiled in Medea's kettle, that his eulogist triumphantly tells us he translated Ariosto, and published tales exhibiting pictures of voluptuousness without indecency; and these boasted exploits are adduced as adding fresh laurels to a being on the very verge of eternity!

Hear a celebrated academician immortalize one of the deceased confraternity in his public oration! In illustrating the character of his friend, who died in extreme old age, he describes this period as 'a season when ingenious trifling is peculiarly graceful; a period in which men might give themselves up to levity with the least scruple and the most success. It is in old age, says the orator, that *the mind is disabused on all subjects, and that a man has a right to jest upon every thing!* It is then that long experience has taught him the wit of concealing reason under a veil which may embellish it! *

Whoever has cast an eye on the lately published letters of Madame du Deffane,—a most unnecessary and uprofitable addition to the late load of similar literary mischiefs,—will have beheld such a picture of the manners even of private and select society, among persons of high rank, science, taste, and literature, as must make him look on these distinctions without envy, when behold disconnected with those principles which alone render talents estimable.

In the history of this distinguished lady, we find these striking circumstances: they present a melancholy instance how completely in Paris, at that time, a disregard of all the obligations of duty, all sense of religion, all the charities of domestic virtue, all the purposes of social usefulness, was, on *her* part, perfectly compatible with her being received into the first society. On the part of her associates, all the objections, insurmountable, we trust, in any other place, were there sacrificed to the reigning idol—the fondness for display in conversation, the vanity of eclipsing those who eclipsed others.

We see also how little splendid talents contribute to the felicities of the life, or to the virtues of the possessor. We even see that, when not under the controul of sound principle, they awfully increase the present capacity for evil, and the responsibility of a future reckoning. Instead of promoting improvement, they carry contamination. In morals as well as in politics,

'Great power is an achievement of great ill.'

Some of these brilliant societies fostered in their bosoms the serpents that were so soon to sting, not only their country, but all Europe. Here were cherished those academical philosophers, wits, and political economists, who first sounded the alarm for the simultaneous extinction of thrones and altars; who first exhibited the portentous remedies for curing despotism by anarchy, and superstition by atheism; who sowed the first prolific seeds of those revolutionary horrors which so rapidly sprung up into the poisonous tree of liberty, and who hurled their arrows at the God of Heaven, and erected on the meditated ruins of his kingdom, the temple of the goddess of reason.

Previously to some of Madame du Deffane's numerous intrigues, she had been separated from her husband, on the ground which, it is presumed, the laws of England would not recognise as a lawful impediment—*that 'he was a weak and tiresome companion!'* She was extraordinarily acute, but her acuteness, though it was frequently just, was always malicious.

* Speech of Condorcet to the Academy on the death of Monsieur de Tressen.

It is difficult to say whether she was more completely deficient in sensibility or principle. She possessed all the qualities which attract, but wanted all those which attach; or rather, she wanted no talent but that of turning those she possessed to a better account. Not possessing the female virtues, she either did not believe in their existence, or despised them. If she wanted any vice, it was that of hypocrisy; for she takes little pains to hide qualities which were not fit to be seen. If she possessed any virtue, it was frankness, which yet was often disfigured by coarseness, and not seldom counteracted by falsehood. She wanted all the good feelings of kindness, affection, and tenderness; and possessed in perfection all the bad ones of ill-nature, jealousy, and envy; but her ruling passion was a selfishness the most deeply rooted, and an egotism the most completely unconquerable.

The dark and hollow character which she takes little pains to conceal, is rendered more broadly conspicuous by the warmth of her colouring, the strength of her language, and the power of her wit, all frequently exercised in proclaiming her own impieties.

It is a striking proof of the unrelenting rancour of her heart, that a friend, of the same class of character,* whom she had formerly loved as much as she could love any woman; one who had been her select companion in her own house fifteen years, but who had quitted her in disgust, and set up a *talking house* for herself, which drew away some of 'the best feathers in her wing;'—on hearing the death of this rival lady, she only exclaimed, 'I wish she had died many years ago, and then I should not have lost D'Alembert!'

We learn from her letters, that her splendid society was composed not merely of wits, philosophers, and academicians, but of women of rank, of nobles, and of statesmen, with one of whom she was connected.—From those, it must be confessed, admirably written epistles, we profitably learn much of the hollowness of worldly friendships, much of the insincerity of mere wits and mere men of letters—of persons who associate together, partly for the credit of having it known that they are so associated—who mix acrimony and adulation, venturing to indemnify themselves for their reciprocal flattery when together, by their cutting sarcasms when separated. Happily, the more we see of these communications the more we are convinced that nothing but sound principle, 'godly sincerity,' a conquest over vanity, a triumph over egotism, an habitual struggle against selfishness can establish an honourable, virtuous and durable friendship, or shed a benign lustre on the most polished society.

We repeat, that these reports are not industriously gleaned from rival parties, ill-informed journalists, nor even from virtuous writers, eager to expose the vices they detested; but from the principal performers in the scene—from a woman whose uncontrollable openness prevents her concealing her own vices.

We see, not without pain, her exposure of the faults of some of the associates whom she so sedulously courts, and so constantly abuses; we see the malignity which forces itself through all her endeavours to appear amiable in the eyes of the distinguished person to whom she writes; we see the corroding envy, the gnawing jealousy, and sometimes the obvious aversion to the individuals of a society, without which she cannot exist; which society probably entertained a reciprocal hatred of their flattering hostess, and yet could not exist without *her*. All this exhibits a scene, from which an unsophisticated English heart turns away, sickening with disgust.

This unhappy woman, old, deaf, blind, repining, and impious, yet drew this accomplished society about her by their mutual fondness for conversation. They met without affection, they parted without regret; yet meet they must—they were necessary to each other, not for comfort, for they knew neither the name nor the thing; but society being an article of the first necessity for the support of existence, it must be had with companions hating, and hated by, each other. Under such circumstances, the fondness for society seems not so much a taste, as a raging appetite.

It is, however, a cheerless, heartless society, where persons of talents and breeding meet, not so much to enjoy each other, as to get rid of themselves. Intimacy without confidence, and intercourse without esteem, add little to the genuine delights of social life. Competition, while it inflames vanity, is no improver of kindness.

In a city like Paris, where men were wits and authors by profession, and ladies judges and critics by courtesy, nothing was considered as an exclusion from these societies but want of talents to amuse, or taste to decide. The poet produced his work, not, however, so much to be corrected as applauded; not so much to be counselled as flattered; he, in return, paying usuriously, in the same counterfeit coin, the honour conferred on him, and the benefit done him, by their proclamation of the beauty of his work; his fame, perhaps, suspended on the avowed patronage of a woman whom we, in our plain language, should call infamous. He is grateful to receive his imprimatur and his crown of laurel from fair and fashionable, but impure hands; and Paris resounds, next morning, with the immortality assigned him by the decision of this coterie.

All this might be very well, or at least would not be so very bad, if there were no future reckoning; but to see old age without consolation, dreading solitude as only less terrible than death to contemplate loss of sight as only augmenting spiritual blindness, yet to see the afflicted sufferer clinging to this miserable existence, and closing a life of sin with a death without penitence and without hope; to consider talents capable of great things, abused and misapplied; a God not merely forsaken, but denied; all these are images from which the sober mind turns away with horror softened by compassion. May every daughter of Britain say, with the patriarch of old, 'Come not into their secret, O my soul; to their assembly let not thine honour be united!'

Some ladies of unimpeached morality were found in these coteries. True: yet we hope to

* Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse.

be forgiven for saying, that they could have retained but little of that delicacy which should preserve the purity of society, when they make no scruple of mixing intimately with women whose practices they would not by any means adopt. In such society virtue withers, delicacy is impaired, and principle finally extinguished.

In this view it is impossible not to make a short digression, to observe with gratitude on the obligations of English society to our late venerated queen. Not to insist on the admirable examples she set in her exact performance of all the domestic duties; her public conduct, in one important instance, will ever reflect honour on her memory—we mean her solicitude to prevent the impure mixtures to which we are now alluding. She raised as it were, a rampart between vice and virtue; and her strictness in excluding from the royal presence all who had forfeited their claim to be introduced to it, had a general moral effect, by excluding them also from the virtuous society of others of their own rank. Discriminations of this nature are of incalculable value in preserving the distinctions between correctness and impurity, when no offender, though of the highest rank, can preserve the public dignity of the station she has dishonoured.

'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not received;
But was a wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemished to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.'

COWPER.

London also has had its select assemblies for conversation. They were neither trifling, dull, nor pedantic. If there were less display of wit, less pains to be easy, less study to be natural, less affectation of being unaffected, less effort to be unconstrained, there was more sincerity, integrity, and kindness. If there was a less perpetual aim at being ingenious, ingenuity was never wanting. If there were less persiflage and sarcasm, there was more affection, truth, and nature. Religion, though not discussed, was always venerated, and no degree of rank or talent would have procured an introduction when there was any taint on the reputation.

The tone of social intercourse is at present, perhaps, likely to be raised by the recent adoption of more direct religious improvement in the private parties of some persons of rank and talents. But to return to Paris.

One instance more of the substitution of talent for virtue, and of the little regard paid to the absence of the one where the other abounded; one instance more, and we will relieve our readers, and carry them to breathe a purer atmosphere in better company. The celebrated Madame d'Epinay is described by one of her admirers,* who came in the order of succession next after Rousseau, not only as the most attractive, but most *discreet* of women! This discretion, which is his rather than hers, appears in his making her indulgence in forbidden gratifications, consistent with her constant regard for public opinion, and the desire of reputation. He records, intentionally to her honour, that being above all prejudices herself, (that is, above the weakness of Christianity,)' yet no one knew better what was due to the prejudices of others. She conformed, he observes, as scrupulously to old usages, as to new opinions, and kept up the outward observances of the church as much as a woman of an ordinary mind could have done; that is, she was at once an infidel and a hypocrite. He proclaims to her glory, that, 'without believing in any catechism but that of good sense, she never failed to receive the sacraments, painful as the stupid ceremony was, with the best grace imaginable, as often as decency, or the scruples of her friends, made it becoming.' 'Perhaps,' adds her profane panegyrist, 'there was as much greatness in receiving them with *her* notion of them, as there would have been in refusing them.' Is it any wonder that, with such a conformity of principles, she obtained the prize of the academy, as well as the homage of the academician?

We are amused to think with what a contemptuous smile of pity these ladies, with all their allowed taste and learning, must, if they were consistent, have beheld the pictures of these obsolete wives, Andromache and Penelope, as delineated by the Grecian bard—pictures of female excellence and domestic virtue, which have drawn the tear of admiring sympathy from many a British eye. The poet has omitted to mention whether their valiant lords loved them the less for having spent the hours of *their* absence in scenes of bloody warfare or perilous adventure, in mournful solitude, cheating the time in simple occupations, yet such as served to keep up the memory of their beloved heroes; in one, by contriving decorations for a living lord, or, in the other, honouring the memory of the dead one, by preparing funeral honours for his father, ingeniously deferring the detested second nuptials by nightly unravelling the daily labour, and thus keeping her promise of consent when the work should be finished, and preserving her fidelity to her lord by never finishing it.

What manly English heart would not prefer the fond anxiety of the Trojan wife, which led her in secret to the watch-tower to mark the battle, and tenderly seek to explore her husband so soon to bleed,—to all the Aspasias of Greece, to all the Du Deffands, the De l'Espinasses, the D'Epinays, to all the beau ideal of the fancy, and all the practical pollutions of the life, of the '*bonnes societies*' of the metropolis of France.

But, happily, we need not go back to ransack antiquity for *examples* in the finely imagined females of Troy or Ithica, nor for *warnings* to the polished, but profligate courtezans of Athens, nor to the criminal countesse of Paris;—we may find instances of the one, and a complete contrast to the other, nearer home. We need go no further for the highest examples of female dignity, talent, and worth, than are to be found in the private biography of our own country.

We could produce no inconsiderable number in the highest rank of women, who if their names are not blazoned in the book of fame, will be recorded in more lasting characters in the book of life—who, if their memoirs are not spangled with their *bons mots*, have yet had their good actions and holy principles embalmed

* Le Baron de Grimm.

in the writings of their faithful Christian friends. But we shall confine ourselves to a very few.

The Lady Mary Armyne, descended from the ancient Earls of Shrewsbury, was eminently skilled in human, but especially in divine learning. But the remembrance of her talents, which appear to have been of the first order, is lost in that of her Christian virtues. Among numerous other instances of her pious exertions, she contributed largely to the support of a society for converting the Indians in New-England, long before missions were thought of by her tardy countrymen. On hearing of the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew, she instantly devoted a large sum to those exiled and destitute clergymen who had fled hither for protection. Her piety was as exemplary as that extensive benevolence of which it was the source.

In Birch's Life of the Hon. Robert Boyle, there is a most interesting account of Mary, Countess of Warwick, of whom it is saying every thing to say that she was entirely worthy of being sister to that illustrious Christian philosopher. Of the eminently pious Lady Frances Hobart, the ornament of the court of James the First, Dr. Collins has preserved an interesting memorial. A long and unwearied attention, for many years to the bodily sufferings of her lord, could only be surpassed by her anxiety for his spiritual interests. Through the blessing of God she became the honoured instrument of a total change in his character, who never named her by any other appellation than that of his 'dear saint.' This term had not then fallen into reproach.

Of Susanna, Countess of Suffolk, it is impossible to say too much. For brevity's sake, however, we must restrict ourselves to one or two particulars in speaking of a life which was a constant series of secret piety and active benevolence. When near her end, which happened in her twenty-second year, she implored her lord, that whatever provision might be made for the fortunes or acquirements of her children, that they might be educated in the strictest principles of Christianity, in comparison of which she esteemed all worldly accomplishments as nothing. To her dying father, who had been inattentive to Christian duties, she administered such spiritual supports, that in rapture he praised God that he should live to receive his best religious consolations from his own child!

To the memory of the Lady Cutts, the incomparable wife of the gallant Lord Cutts, so distinguished at the siege of Namur, noble justice has been done in an admirable funeral sermon of Bishop Atterbury, which we would recommend to every reader who has a taste for exalted piety or fine writing.

The Lady Elizabeth Hastings was not less distinguished for superior talents than for eminence in every Christian attainment.—She has been celebrated for both in the Tatler, under the very inappropriate appellation of Aspasia. No two characters could form a more perfect contrast.

But the time would fail to enumerate all the English ladies who have conferred honour on their country. Of those already mentioned all possessed considerable talents. Some were eminent for their skill in the dead languages; others for their knowledge of philosophy and the sciences; all for their high religious attainments. All were practical Christians—all adorned their profession by the strictest attention to the domestic, the relative, and the social duties.*

But what shall we say to Rachel, Lady Russell? Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all! She has unintentionally bequeathed us her character in her letters. Though there is little elegance in her style, there is all the dignity of wisdom and truth in her sentiments. Many specimens of epistolary writing might be produced, which excel these in the graces of composition, but few which surpass them in that strong sense, solid judgment, and those discriminating powers which were the characteristics of her intellectual attainments, as heroic fortitude, Christian humility, unshaken trust in God, and submission to his dispensations, were of her religious character. Such a combination of tenderness the most exquisite, magnanimity the most unaffected, and Christian piety the most practical, have not often met in the same mind.

An acute, but sceptical French writer, calls 'Magnanimity the good sense of pride, and the noblest way of obtaining praise.'—How well has the prince of Pagan philosophers, by anticipation, corrected this tinsel phrase!' 'If thou art not good, thy magnanimity is ridiculous, and worthy of no honour.' How did our sublime Christian sufferer practically improve upon both! 'Seek not the honour which cometh from men, but that which cometh from God.'

Whether we view this illustrious daughter of the virtuous Southampton taking notes on the public trial of her noble consort, concealing the tender anguish of the wife under the assumed composure of the secretary; whether we behold her, after his condemnation, prostrate at the feet of the unfeeling monarch, imploring a short reprieve for her adored husband, while the iron-hearted king heard the petition without emotion, and refused it without regret; whether we behold her sublime composure at their final separation, which drew from her dying lord the confession, 'the bitterness of death is past;' whether we behold her heroic resolution rather to see him die, than to persuade him to any dishonourable means to preserve his life; whether we see her superiority to resentment afterwards towards the promoters of his execution,—no expression of an unforgiving spirit; no hard sentence escaping her, even against the savage Jeffries, who pronounced his condemnation, adding insult to cruelty; no triumph when that infamous judge was afterwards disgraced and imprisoned; if we view her in that more than temperate letter to the King a few days after her dear lord's execution, declaring that, if she were capable of consolation, it would only be that her lord's fame might be preserved in the King's more favourable opinion:—had long habits of voluptuousness left any sense of pity in this corrupt king; or, rather, if a heart had not been forgotten in his anatomy, it must have been

* For a full account of these, and many other equally eminent ladies, see 'Memoirs of Pious Women'

touched at her humble entreaty that 'he would grant his pardon to a woman amazed with grief, to the daughter of a man who had served his father in his greatest extremities, and his Majesty in his greatest perils:'—if we view this extraordinary sufferer under all these trials, while we admire the woman, we must adore the divine grace which alone could sustain her under them.

After this imperfect sketch, may we not say, that, for an example of conjugal tenderness, we need not go out of our own country for a perfect model? Portia swallowing fire because she would not survive her Brutus, the *Pæte, non dolet* of the faithful Arraia, as she stabbed herself, and then presented the sword to her husband, to set him an example of dying bravely; these heroic instances of conjugal affection, which have been the admiration of ages, are surpassed by the conduct of Lady Russell: *they* died a voluntary death rather than outlive their husbands; Christianity imposed on *her* the severer duty of surviving hers—of living to suffer calamities scarcely less trying, and to perform duties scarcely less heroic. After weeping herself blind, after the loss of her only son, the Duke of Bedford, let us view her called to witness the death of her daughter, the Duchess of Rutland. After seeing her dead corpse, let us behold her going to the chamber of her other daughter, the Duchess of Devonshire, then confined in childbed, of which the other had just died. When her only surviving daughter inquired after her sister, the mother cheerfully replied, 'I have just seen her out of bed!'—It was in her coffin.

In whatever attitude, then, we consider the portrait of this illustrious lady it is with fresh admiration. Each lineament derives additional beauty from its harmony with the rest, the symmetry of the features corresponding with the just proportions of the whole figure.

England's Best Hope.

We have dwelt on the present and the past, as well with reference to our neighbours as ourselves. If we have shown that we have little regret in any still remaining difference between the inhabitants of the opposite shores, and much to fear from a growing resemblance between them; if we have successfully hinted at the grounds of our own real superiority, and the possibility of maintaining, and even increasing our greatness, to any extent consistent with human imperfection; if we have, in the two preceding chapters, anticipated what might be our ultimate degradation, whilst in the first we had pointed at the heights to which we may reasonably aspire; let us not think it unworthy our attention to inquire how we can alone answer our high destination, revive what we have lost, attain what more is within our reach, or having attained it how we may perpetuate the inestimable blessing.

We have at length, though with a slow and reluctant movement, begun to provide a national education for the children of the poor. Prejudice held out against it with its accustomed pertinacity,—knowledge would only make them idle, ignorance would preserve subordination, the knowledge of their duty would impede the performance of it. This last we did not perhaps say in so many words, but was it not the principle of our conduct? We put off the instruction of the poor till the growth of crime made the rich tremble. We refused to make them better till they grew so much worse as to augment the difficulty, as to lessen the probability of their reform. The alarm came home to the opulent. They were afraid for their property, for their lives; they were driven to do what had long been their duty not to have left undone. But they did it not, 'till the overflowings of ungodliness made them afraid.' They discovered at length, that ignorance had not made better subjects, better servants, better men. This lesson they might have condescended to learn sooner from the Irish rebels, from the French revolutionists. We have at length done well, though we have done it reluctantly. We have begun to instruct the poor in the knowledge of religion.

But there is another class, a class surely of no minor importance, from whom too many still withhold the same blessing. If, as is the public opinion, it is the force of temptation which has produced so much crime among the poor, are not the rich, and especially the children of the rich, exposed to at least as strong temptations, not indeed to steal, but to violate other commandments of equal authority? Laws, without manners, will not do all we expect from them: manners without religion will be but imperfectly reformed. And who will say that religious reformation will be complete, whilst it is confined to a single class, or deemed at least a work of supererogation by some among the higher ranks? There are, however, many honourable exceptions, the number of which is, we trust, increasing.

Why should the poor monopolize our benevolence? Why should the rich in this one instance, be so disinterested? Why should not the same charity be extended to the children of the opulent and the great? Why should the son of the nobleman, not share the advantage now bestowed on the children of his servant, of his workman, of the poorest of his neighbours? Why should not Christian instruction be made a prominent article in the education of those who are to govern and to legislate, as well as of those who are to work and to serve? Why are these most important beings, the very beings in this enlightened country whose immortal interests are the most neglected?

The Apostle tells us, that 'he who provides not for his own house has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' If this be true of temporal, what shall be said of him who neglects to make 'for his own' a spiritual provision? Does not he far more emphatically deny 'that faith' which is violated even in the other inferior case?

If we have begun to instruct the poor with a view to check the spirit of insubordination, that spirit requires little less suppression in our own families. In all ranks it is the prevailing evil of the present day. The diminished obedience of children to parents, of servants to masters,

of subjects to sovereigns, all spring from one common root—an abatement of the reverence to the authority of God. Fathers should therefore keep up in their offspring, as long as possible, a dependance on themselves, without which they will gradually shake off their dependence on their Maker. Independence of every kind, as it is the prevailing wish, so it is the most alarming danger. With filial obedience, obedience to Divine authority will become connected; but the muzzle of domestic restraint shaken off, there will be no controul of any kind left. Might not a more exact Christian institution help to arrest the same spirit which has, within a few years, so frequently broken out in our, in many respects, excellent public schools? We mean not altogether, to censure the honourable seminaries. Do not the youth carry thither, rather than acquire there, this want of subordination? Is it not too often previously fostered at home by the habits of luxury, the taste for expense, the unrestrained indulgences, the unsubdued tempers, which so ill prepare them to submit to moral discipline? Laxity of manners and of principles act reciprocally: they are alternately cause and effect.

Tender parents are, indeed, grieved at the indications of evil dispositions in their children; but even worthy people do not always study the human character: they are too much disposed to believe this budding vice but accidental defect—a failing which time will cure. Time cures nothing; time only inveterates, only exasperates, where religion is not called in as a corrective. It is in vain to hope to tame the headstrong violence of the passions by a few moral sentences; the curb is too weak for the natural ferocity of the animal. If the most religious education does not always answer the end, what end is an education, in which religion does not predominate, likely to produce? How is the Christian character likely to be formed without the strict inculcation of religious principles, without the powerful discipline of religious and moral habits?

Parents are naturally and honourably anxious about advancing the interest of their sons; but they do not always extend this anxiety to their best interests. They prepare them for the world, but neglect to prepare them for eternity. We reveal our words; they do not even make the best preparation for the world. Their affection is warm, but is short-sighted; for surely that principle which is the root of all virtuous action, of all the great qualities of the heart, of integrity, of sober-mindedness, of patience, of self-denial, of veracity, of fortitude, of perseverance in a right pursuit, is likely to produce a character not unqualified for the best services to society; for advancement in life, for fitness for the most useful employments, for adorning the most honourable situations; for we do not recommend such a religion as would make Ascetics, as would abstract men from the business or the duties of life, or from the true enjoyments of society. There seems, indeed, little necessity for guarding against evils of which we see no great danger.

Gentlemen should be scholars; liberal learning need not interfere with religious acquirements, unless it be so conducted as to leave no time for its cultivation, unless it cause them to consider religion as an object of inferior regard. But no human learning ought to keep religious instruction in the back ground, so as to render it an incidental, a subordinate part in the education of a Christian gentleman.

Some apology might be made for the natives of a neighbouring kingdom for their contempt of religion, from the load of absurd and superstitious observances which degrade it. Though even *they* might have discovered, under these disadvantages, much that is good; for they have had writers who yield to none in elevation of sentiment, in loftiness of genius, and sublimity of devotion.* Yet the labours of these excellent men have left the character of their religion unaltered.

But *we* have no such excuse to plead for the contempt or neglect of religion. Here, Christianity presents herself to us neither dishonoured, degraded, nor disfigured. Here she is set before us in all her original purity; we see her in her whole consistent character, in all her fair and just proportions, as she came from the hands of her Divine Author. We see her as she has been completely rescued from that encumbering load under which she had so long groaned; delivered from her long bondage, by the labours of our blessed reformers, and handed down to us unmutilated and undefaced.

If every English gentleman did but seriously reflect, how much the future moral prosperity of his country depends on the education he may at this moment be giving to his son, even if his paternal feelings did not stimulate his zealous endeavours, his patriotic would.

May the unworthy writer, who loves her country with an ardour which the superior worth of that country justifies; who, during a long life, has anxiously watched its alternations of prosperous and adverse fortune; and who, on the very verge of eternity, is proportionally anxious for its moral prosperity, as she approaches nearer to that state, in view of which all temporal considerations diminish in their value; may she hope that her egotism will be forgiven, and her pardon be obtained for the liberty she is taking? May she venture to suppose that she is now conversing with some individual father of a family in the higher ranks of life, and, presuming that he would permit the freedom, address him, and through him, every man of rank and fortune in the kingdom, in plain and bold language, with something like the following suggestions?

Let it be your principal concern to train up your son in the fear of God. Make this fear, which is not only 'the beginning of wisdom' in point of excellence, the same also in priority of time. Let the beginning of wisdom be made

* What has been said here and elsewhere of France, and of the religion of France, has been said 'more in sorrow than in anger,' and with the single view of caution to our own country. However we deprecate the past, we shall still cherish the hope, that having witnessed the horrors of a political, we may one day hail the dawn of a moral revolution. A virtuous King, and an improving government, leave us not without hope that this fair part of the globe may yet rise in those essentials without which a country can never be *truly* great. May they eventually improve, in 'that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation!'

the beginning of education. Imbue the youthful mind betimes with correct tastes, sound principles, good affections and right habits. Consider that the tastes, principles, affections, and habits he now forms, are to be the elements of his future character; the fountain of honourable actions, the germ of whatever may hereafter be pure, virtuous, lovely, and of good report.

In his education never lose sight of this great truth, that irreligion is the death of all that is graceful, and amiable, in the human mind; the destruction of all moral beauty. Its foundations are in the dust, and it is a vain attempt to hope to raise a noble superstructure on so mean and despicable a basis. Tell him, that the irreligious man never looks out of self. He is his own centre; all his views are low; he has no conception of any thing that is lofty in virtue, or sublime in feeling. How should he? He does not look to God as the model of perfection.—He will act nothing that is holy, for he does not honour *his* commands; he will conceive nothing that is great, for he does not look to the Architype of greatness; there is no image of true grandeur in his soul. His mind will be reduced to the narrowness of the things to which it is familiarized, and stoop to the littleness of the objects about which it is conversant. His views will not be noble, because they are not excursive; they are confined, imprisoned, limed, entangled in earth and its concerns; they never expatiate in the boundless regions of immortality. He has no connecting link between himself and things

'Beyond this visible diurnal sphere.'

His soul is cramped in the exercise of all its noblest faculties; his heart paralyzed in its best attempts after a fugitive, low-minded virtue.

There is no true elevation of soul but what the youth must acquire by the knowledge of God as revealed in his word; no perfect example but that exhibited to him in the character of his Divine Son; nothing but the Gospel, through the grace of God, will check his corruptions, give him a sense of his accountableness, and raise his nature above the degraded state to which sin has reduced it.

It is material to reflect that nothing really preparative to his well-being in this life, and conducive to his qualification as an ornament to his country, will otherwise than forward him in his progress for another country, 'even a heavenly' Adopt the measures which even nature and reason suggest for making him a distinguished member of human society, and it will not lessen your satisfaction, nor lower your gratitude, when you see that you have not only trained him to be a useful and virtuous citizen, but also a candidate for heaven.

Let your child be made familiarly acquainted with God's word, his providence, his controlling power, his superintending eye. Let him be taught not barely to read, but to understand, to love to venerate his Bible. Implant at a proper season, in his mind, the evidences of Christianity, in the clearest, simplest, and most explicit manner. Furnish him with arguments to defend it, for he will not fail to hear it attacked. Teach him to despise ridicule, that last resort of the bad defender of a bad cause; for he will find that those who cannot argue can sneer, and he may feel it harder to withstand the one than the other.

Inform him that in France it was the ignorance of religion which produced the contempt of it; and that both together overturned the state, by inculcating principles hostile to all virtue, fostering passions destructive of all order, and an impatience of control subversive of all government: all springing from one common source, all meeting in one common centre, a combination to throw off the government of God himself. Impress upon his young mind that important truth, that there can be no security for a state in which religion is not warmly, yet wisely taught by its ministers, cherished by its government, and believed and reverenced by the people.

There are certain traditional sayings which claim a sort of prescriptive right to be received, which pass unexamined, and are credited as oracular. Guard him against these false and sordid, but popular maxims, which, though the press may be used chiefly by the lower orders, the things themselves are practically adopted, pretty equally, by 'the great vulgar and the small.' Some vindicate speculatively loose principles, by the assertion that 'thoughts are free.' Tell your son this is not true. A Christian must endeavour to bring his thoughts to the same correct standard with his actions, and from the same awful motive, 'Thou God seest!'

There is another popular but unfounded axiom respecting the use of wealth, namely, that 'A man may do what he will with his own.' Christianity denies this assertion also. Every man has indeed a legal right to the disposal of his own property, but religion interdicts his right to spend it in vanity or vice; or if he be exempt from these grosser temptations, she still abridges his right to monopolise it. Christianity expects that the deserving and the distressed shall come in for such a proportion of his wealth as an enlightened conscience shall dictate. The divine person who refused, in a legal sense, to be 'a divider, or a judge,' over a contested property, did not fail to graft on the question he avoided answering, the imperative caution, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.'

There is another fatal lesson which he will learn in the world, and which the natural pride of his own heart will second; namely, that to resent an injury is a mark of spirit, while to forgive it shows a base mind. The prince of darkness, in his long catalogue of expedients, never invented a maxim which has brought more generous but ill-disciplined souls to destruction.

The unurbed desires, the unrestrained passions, to which we have before adverted, the contempt of submission, the supposed meanness of forbearance, the hot resentments not controlled betimes in the boy, may have been preparing the man for an act which may hereafter fill his whole life with careless remorse.

Boys well born and accustomed to well bred society have a sort of instinctive notion of *honour*, which is strengthened by the conversation to which they are sometimes exposed. Seize

upon this spirit, whether instinctive or contracted, but seize it with a view to convert it to higher purposes. This popular notion of honour may seem to give dignity to the tone of his conversation, while it is inflating his heart with arrogance. It may indeed set him above doing an act which some fashionable men may agree to call base, but it will not preserve him from a duel, which these men agree to call honourable. But whatever acquittal a jury of the world's men of honour may pronounce on such a transaction, it will, by that awful decision from which there lies no appeal, by the difinitive sentence of the great Judge of quick and dead, be pronounced murder; murder of one of them in the act, of both in the intention; murder as criminal as that which brings its vulgar perpetrator on the highway to his ignominious catastrophe.

Lay hold then on this high-minded feeling, and endeavour to direct it into a purer channel. Lead his aspiring mind to higher objects. Let the hope of the favour, and the dread of the displeasure of God, expel from his heart a too eager desire to court the applause or escape the censure of irreligious men, by acts which, while they would offend his Maker, would destroy his own soul. Let him learn to distinguish between the swellings of human arrogance, and the consciousness of Christian dignity. Worldly maxims of honour are tumid, but they are not great.

There is no sure preservation from these mischiefs, but in an education formed on the religion of Jesus Christ. The principles drawn from the spirit of the Gospel, conscientiously adopted, and acted upon, would subvert all the hollow and destructive maxims of the worldly code. How many boiling passions might have been cooled, how many disappointed hearts and mourning spirits healed, how many duels, how many suicides, (both now so dreadfully prevalent) might have been prevented, by the early and unremitted application of this one grand specific.

Cultivate in your son whatever is valuable in science, or elegant in literature.—Independently of its own intrinsic worth, it will, by filling up his time and engaging his thoughts, assist in setting his mind above low and sordid tastes, and leave him little leisure or relish for the base and grovelling pursuits of sensuality. A love of learning judiciously instilled, is amongst the most probable *human* preservatives from vulgar vice; though since it is human, it can go but certain lengths as to moral benefit; and we have witnessed many deplorable instances of its failure, in minds of the highest literary attainments, for want of being under the direction of a superior principle. It is, however, a most valuable auxiliary, not only in improving the intellect and refining the taste, but, as we have already observed, in rescuing so much leisure from inferior pursuits.

But learning, be it repeated, though it invigorates the mind, will not reform it. It is a shining ornament, but not of the nature of a corrective. Moral evil is not cured, is not regulated,—nay it may even be inflamed by it, where intellectual science is made its own end, and not considered subservient to a higher. Learning will strongly teach him to despise what is worthless in composition, but will feebly lift him above what is unworthy in practice. It will correct his taste, but will not enable him to resist temptation: it will improve his judgment of the world, but will not secure him from its pollutions. Human learning will only teach him the knowledge of others, the Bible that of himself.

Let him therefore enter into the battle of the world armed with weapons from the divine armoury; stoutly furnished with motives and arguments drawn from religion, of potency to fortify his resolutions, convince his understanding, and affect his heart. Let him see in your example, that religion is neither unmanly or ungentlemanly. Accustom him not to hear the three dominant spiritual, and intellectual sins, PRIDE, SELFISHNESS, and EGOTISM, treated with an indulgence not shown to such as are more disreputable, gross, and scandalous. Against both classes the whole artillery of the Gospel is impartially levelled. Of the first, peculiar condemnation is intimated in Scripture. Of pride it is observed, that 'God resisteth the proud,' and that it is hard to be found 'fighting against God.' Against selfishness it is specifically proclaimed, that 'no man' with any pretensions to a Christian character 'liveth to himself;' that we are not to 'seek our own things,' and that we must 'bear one another's burdens.'—Against egotism a host of precepts present themselves in battle array,—'to esteem others better than ourselves, to avoid vain glory, to look on the things of others; to be slow to speak, ready to hear.'

Though these interior and mental sins are as much cherished by impiety as those which are coarser and more notorious, yet as the latter can produce no plausible pretence for their indulgence; as they cannot be qualified by any sophistry, nor covered by any artifice, they are less likely to hold out to the end. Morality is disgusted by vulgar vice, by the practical sins of the sensual man; but mere morality can never extirpate the vices of the heart and mind: it is not always her aim, nor if it were, could she accomplish it.

In your conversation with the young person, do not be satisfied to *generalize* religion. Religion is an indefinite term, a vague word which may be made to involve a variety of meanings, and to amalgamate a number of discrepancies. It may release a man from all the prescribed institutions of Christianity; it may set him loose from all its peculiar doctrines and restraints; turn him adrift, and dismiss him to his choice between the 'Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,' of the sceptical poet. Since life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel, a *general* religion is no religion at all. His must be the religion of the New Testament. Be not ashamed to teach your son the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you believe that there is no other name under heaven by which yourself can be saved, you must be assured that there is no other salvation for your son. Defer not then too long to communicate to him the distinctive peculiarities of our faith. Other notions will occupy the space which you leave vacant. O! stamp the right impressions on his heart while it is soft, tender, and ductile; and he will hereafter mix these early imbibed feelings, and sentiments,

and principles, with his other sweet associations, his other pleasing recollections of the vernal season of life; cherished images! which the matured mind is fond of retracing, and which commonly remain vivid when most others have faded, or are obliterated.

Fancy not that these acquisitions and pursuits will blight the opening buds of youthful gayety; that they will check his vivacity, or obstruct his amiable cheerfulness. The ingenuous unvitiated mind is never so happy as when in a state of virtuous exertion, as when engaged about some object to which it must look up; something which, kindling its energies raises its views; something which excites the ambition of lifting it above itself.

Much less fear that the pursuits here recommended will depress his genius; it will exalt it; his mind will find wider room in which to expand; his horizon will be more extensive; his intellectual eye will take in a wider range; the whole man will have an ample region in which to expatiate. To know that he is formed for immortality, is not likely to contract his ideas, or to shorten his views. It is irreligion which shrinks and shrivels up the faculties, by debasing the spirit, and degrading the soul.

And if to know that he is an immortal being will exalt his ideas, to know that he is an accountable being will correct his habits. If to know that 'God *is*' will raise his thoughts and desires to all that is perfect, fair, and good,—to know that 'God is the rewarder of all them that seek Him,' will stimulate him in the race of Christian duty;—to know that there is a day in which God will judge the world, will quicken his preparation for that day.

As he advances in age and knowledge, impress upon his mind, that in that day of awful inquisition he must stand unconnected, single, naked! It is not the best attachments he may have formed, the most valuable societies to which he may have belonged, that will then stand him any stead. He must therefore join them now with a pure and simple intention;—he must not seek them as something on which to lean, as something with which to share his responsibility—this is his own single undivided concern. It is vain to hope that by belonging to any society, however good, to any party however honourable, he can shrink from his own personal, individual, accountableness. The union of the labourers gives no claim to the division of the responsibility. In this world we may be most useful among bodies of men; in the great judgment we must stand alone. We assist them here, but they cannot answer for us hereafter.

From his Bible, and from his Bible only, let him draw his sense of those principles, of that standard by which he will hereafter be judged; and be careful ever to distinguish in his mind between the worldly morality which he may learn from the multitude, and that Christian holiness which is the dictate of the Scriptures, and of the Scriptures alone. Teach him to discover there, he cannot discover it too soon, that it is not a set of proverbial moral maxims, a few random good actions, decorous and inoffensive manners, the effect of natural feeling, of fashion, of custom, of regard to health, of desire of reputation, that will make a truly valuable character. This is not to be acquired by certain popular virtues, or rather fractions of virtues; for there is no integral virtue where there is no religion. Pleasing manners will attract popular regard, and worldly motives will produce popular actions; but genuine virtue proceeds only from Christian principles. The one is efflorescence, the other is fruit.

After all, though you cannot by your best exertions, seconded by the most fervent prayer, without which exertion will neither be rightly directed nor successfully prosecuted, command success; yet what a support will it be under the possible defeat of your fairest hopes, that you strove to avert it! Even if, through the prevalence of temptation, the perverseness of his own nature, and the malignity of his corruptions, the barbarous son *should* disappoint the best founded hopes of the careful parent; what a heartfelt consolation would it afford you, under this heaviest of all trials, that the misconduct of the child is not imputable to the neglect of the father! The severest evil—and this perhaps is the most severe—is supportable, when not aggravated by the consciousness that we have contributed to bring it upon ourselves. Though it will not pluck the sting from his guilt, it will render the poignancy of your own anguish more tolerable.

But let us indulge higher hopes and brighter prospects for our country. We refer to those hopes with which the first chapter of this little work concluded, namely, the rich provision which God has put into our hands for accomplishing his great designs in our favour. The hope therein expressed, and the means humbly suggested for accomplishing it, was the re-formation of the British character. We have here, feebly indeed, but honestly, shown what obviously appears to be the best security, the most effectual barrier, against the vices and contamination of our prolonged continental intercourse. Religious education, with God's blessing upon it, which every truly Christian father will not fail to invoke, is all in all towards the restoration, the elevation of our national character. And let it never be forgotten, that it is the education of the rich which must finally determine the fate, at once of rich and poor; and by consequence, which must determine the destiny of our country.

Here then is Britain's last, best hope; and when we consider the unparalleled advantages we possess in a learned and orthodox clergy, who instruct us in the sanctuary, and who preside over our public and private seminaries, why need we despair? Why need we doubt, that the Christian religion, grafted on the substantial stock of the genuine British character, and watered by the dews of heaven, may bring forth the noblest productions of which this lower world is capable; though neither the security nor the triumph will be complete till these 'Trees of Righteousness' are transplanted into the paradise of God.

Reader if you are indeed a Christian father, anticipate in idea that triumphant moment, when, having cast your crown at the foot of the

eternal throne, you shall be called upon to give an account of your own conduct, and, as far as had depended on you, of that of your offspring. Think of the multiplied felicities of meeting, in the presence of God, those whom your example and instruction have, through his grace, contributed to bring hither! Think what it will be, to be able, amidst all the hosts of heaven, amidst the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect—think of being able to say to the Universal Father, 'Behold, I and the children thou hast given me!'

ON DOMESTIC ERRORS

IN OPINION, AND IN CERTAIN PRACTICAL HABITS.

On Soundness in Judgment, and Consistency in Conduct.

As a preliminary to the following pages, the writer begs leave to observe, that it consists rather of miscellaneous observations on a variety of topics, than in an attempt at a systematic view of religion or morals. It does not pretend to present an exhibition of Christian doctrine, or to prescribe the duties of a Christian life. It is presumed that the generality of readers who shall honour these pages with their attention, are already, in a greater or less degree, religious characters; consequently, standing in little need of such information as her humble talents could have imparted. But as religion is become a subject of increasing and more general interest, it may not be unseasonable, as we proceed, to point out some of the dangers to which the less advanced Christian may be liable, as well as some of the evils which may subsist with high outward profession. To those who are beginning to see the importance of religion; and of such persons, adored be Almighty goodness! the number is rapidly augmenting; to those interesting characters, may the writer venture to address a few words of affectionate and respectful counsel? Carefully encourage the first dawning dispositions of piety in your heart, cherish every indication of a change in your views and an improvement in your sentiments. Let not the world, nor the things of the world, stifle the new-born principle, nor make you ashamed modestly to avow it.

But while you cultivate this principle by every possible means, avoid the danger of fancying that your religion is confirmed when it is scarcely begun. Do not conclude that a complete change has been effected in your heart because there is a revolution in your opinions, and a favourable alteration in your feelings. The formation of a Christian character is not the work of a day; not only are the views to be changed, but the habits to be new moulded; not only is the heart to be convinced of sin, but its propensities are to be bent in a contrary direction. Be not impatient, therefore, to make a public disclosure of your sentiments. Religion is an interior concern. Try yourselves, prove yourselves, examine yourselves, distrust yourselves. Seek counsel of wise, established, sober Christians. Pray earnestly for more light and knowledge, and especially for perseverance. Pray that you may be able to go on with the same zeal with which you set out. Of how many may it be said, 'Ye did run well—what hindered you?' You ran too fast; your speed exhausted your strength; you had not counted the cost.

Carefully distinguish between the feverish heat of animal fervour, and the vital warmth of Christian feeling. Mere youthful energy, operating upon a newly awakened remorse for a thoughtless life, will carry the mind certain lengths; but if unaccompanied with humility, repentance, and a continual application for a better strength than your own, this slight resource will soon fail. It is not that principle which will encourage progress; it is not that Divine support which will carry you on to the end. The Christian race is not to be run at a heat: religion is a steady, progressive course; it gains speed also: progress quickens the pace; for the nearer the approach to the goal, the more ardent is the desire to reach it. And though, in your further advance, you may imagine yourself not so near as you did when you first set out, this is not really the case; you have a lower opinion of your state, because you have obtained higher views of the spirituality of the law of God, and a more humbling sense of your own unworthiness. Even the almost Christian prophet seems not to have been previously so deeply convinced of sin, as, when overwhelmed by the glory of the Divine vision, he exclaimed, 'Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!'

The person who addresses you has seen some promising characters sadly disappoint the hopes their early stages in religion had excited. By taking too high a tone at first, they not only lost all the ground they had gained, but sunk into indifference themselves, accompanied with a prejudice against serious piety in others. They not only became deserters, but went over to the enemy's camp. Avoid this error. The world is too much disposed to impute rashness, presumption, and enthusiasm to the purest and most correct religious characters. In your instance let them not be furnished with any ground for this censure by your deserving it. If you advance, you glorify God, and promote your own salvation; if you recede, you injure the cause you now intend to serve, and bring upon yourselves a fearful condemnation. Self-abasement, self-examination, and prayer, are the best preservatives for all who have entered on a religious life, and are especially becoming incipient Christians.

There is one thing we would more particularly press on the important class we are now taking

the liberty to address;—*it is the cultivation of a sound judgment.* Of all persons religious persons are most bound to cultivate this precious faculty. We see how highly the great Apostle of the Gentiles valued it. In directing the spiritual labours of his beloved young friend, in stirring him up to every good word and work, he does not forget this exhortation:—'*The Lord give thee a right understanding in all things!*' Again, he prays for his beloved Philippians, 'that their love may abound more and more in *knowledge* and in all *judgment.*' And in his Epistle to the youthful Bishop of Crete, he repeats the admonition to young persons of both sexes to be *sober minded.* These admonitions acquire great additional force when it is considered, that he who gave them was a man of exceeding ardency of temper, and of zeal without a parallel. This experienced saint must have frequently seen the danger of imprudent piety, of self-confidence, of a zeal not regulated by knowledge; and therefore presses the great importance of a *sound judgment.*

Judgment is to the faculties of the mind, what charity is to the virtues of the heart; as without charity the latter are of little worth, so without judgment talents are of little comparative use.

Judgment, with the aid of God's Spirit, and the instructions of his word, is the balance in which qualities are weighed, by which the proportions of our duties, and the harmony of our virtues, are preserved; for it keeps not only the talents in just subordination, but the principles in due equipoise. When exercised in subservience to the Divine rule, the faculty becomes a virtue, and a virtue of a higher order. It restrains irregularity, it subdues vanity, it corrects impetuosity, it checks enthusiasm, and it checks it without diminishing zeal.

One of the most powerful defenders, not only of our church polity, but of our church doctrines, has had the renown of all his great qualities so absorbed in the quality we are recommending; or, rather, this was so much the faculty which maintained his great talents and qualities in their due order, that we never read the name of Hooker without the previous application of this weighty epithet—THE JUDICIOUS.

Judgment is so far from being a cooler of zeal, as some suppose, that it increases its effect by directing its movements; and a warm heart will always produce more extensive, because more lasting good, when conducted by a cool head.

We speak of this attribute the more positively, because it is one, which, more than many others, depends on ourselves. A sound judgment, indeed, is equally bestowed with other blessings by Him from whom cometh every good gift; yet it is not, like the other faculties of the mind, so much born with us, as improved by us. By teaching us to discern the faults of others, it warns us to avoid them; by detecting our own, it leads to their cure. The deepest humility is generally connected with the soundest judgment. The judicious Christian is watchful against speculative errors, as well as against errors in conduct. He never adopts any opinion because it is new, nor any practice because it is fashionable; neither does he, if it be innocent, reject the latter merely for that reason. Judgment is, in short, that quality of the mind which requires to be kept in ever wakeful activity, and the advantages it procures us, will be more apparent, the more it is kept in exercise.

Religious charity more especially demands the full exercise of the judgment. A judicious Christian will double the good done, by his selection of the object, and his manner of relieving it. All things that are good are not equally good. A sound judgment discriminates between the value of the claimants which present themselves, and bestows on them more or less attention, according to their respective claims.

Above all, an enlightened judgment will enable you to attain and, to preserve CONSISTENCY, that infallible criterion of a highly finished Christian character, the want of which makes some really religious persons not a little vulnerable. It was this want in some of his people, which led an eminent divine, at once a man of deep piety and lively wit to say, that 'there were some good persons, with whom it would be time enough to be acquainted in heaven.' So much to be regretted is it, that goodness of intention is not always attended by propriety in the execution.

In another class, the want of consistency makes not a few appear over scrupulous as to some minor points, and lax in others of more importance. These incongruities not only bring the individual into discredit, but religion into disgrace. When the world sees persons, whose views are far from high, act more consistently with *their* avowed views, and frequently more above them, than some whose religion professes to be of a loftier standard, they will prefer the lower, as exhibiting fewer discrepancies, and less obvious contradictions.

Consistency presents Christianity in her fairest attitude, in all her lovely proportion of figure, and correct symmetry of feature.—Consistency is the beautiful result of all the qualities and graces of a truly religious mind united and brought into action, each individually right, all relatively associated.—Where the character is consistent, prejudice cannot ridicule, nor infidelity sneer. It may, indeed, be censured, as holding up a standard above the attainment of the careless. The world may dislike, but it cannot despise it.

In the more advanced Christian, religion may seem to be less prominent in parts of the character, because it is infused into the whole. Like the life blood, its vital power pervades the entire system: not an action of the life that is not governed by it; not a quality of the mind which does not partake of its spirit. It is diffused through the whole conduct, and sheds its benign influence, not only on the things done, but on the temper of the doer in performing them. The affections now have other objects, the time other duties, the thoughts other employments.—There will be more exertion, but with less display; less show, because the principle is become more interior: it will be less obtrusive, because it is more rooted and grounded. There will be more humility, because the heart will have found out its own corruptions.

By the continual exercise of the judgment,

and an habitual aim at consistency, the Christian, though animated, will be orderly. He will be less subject to the ebullitions of zeal, as well as to the languors of its decay. Thus, through the joint operation of judgment in the intellect, and principle in the heart, the religion is become equable, regular, consistent.

There never was but one visible exhibition of infallible judgment and complete consistency. In that Divine person who vouchsafed to pitch his tent among us, and to dwell with men on earth, that He might give us a perfect example in his life, before He obtained salvation for us by his death—in HIM alone was judgment without any shadow of error, consistency without any speck of imperfection. His divine perfections none can approach; but all may humbly imitate those which come within the compass of his humanity.

On Novel Opinions in Religion.

AMONG the numerous innovations of this innovating age, it is deeply to be lamented, that religion should come in for so large a portion. Of this we have a melancholy instance in the system of the new secession.—Many are distorting the sacred doctrines, and slighting the practical ethics of the New Testament. The religion of the Gospel is employed to furnish arms against itself. The truth as it is in Jesus, is fearlessly controverted: its sanctity is no security; its Divine authority is no protection.

In the new system—strange to say! the hardihood of the sceptic is adopted for the professed purpose of purifying Christianity. The dogmatism of the unbeliever is employed for improving our faith in the religion which the unbeliever denies!

This heterogeneous system composed of different elements, made up of conflicting principles, unhappily is not brought forward by the avowed opposers, but by the professed and zealous friends of Christianity;—by religionists placing themselves much above the standard of their former pious associates, with whom they once went to the house of God as friends; by Christians so critically scrupulous, that they can no longer go to that house at all.

Novelties in the sciences and in the arts may be, and generally are, beneficial. Every invention may be an improvement; but in religion they are delusions. Genuine Christianity is not, as one class of men seem to suppose, a modern invention; serious piety is no fresh innovation. 'That which was from the beginning declared we unto you,' are the words of inspiration; the new and living way, therefore, now so much depreciated, is only a continuation in the good old way so long ago recommended by the prophet.

Nor is Christianity, as the recent party seem to suppose, a superannuated thing, which wants repairing; nor is it an incomplete thing, which wants filling up; nor is it a redundant thing, whose excrescences want lopping; nor a defective thing, whose deficiencies must be supplied; nor an erroneous thing, whose errors must be expunged.

But to do these malecontents justice, they do not resemble those reformers who are contented to expose the defects of an existing system, without providing a remedy. This restoration, this purifying, this repairing, this expunging, this lopping, this grafting, this perfecting, they have actually and gratuitously taken into their own hands, with a view either to improve the old religion, or, as their progress rather threatens, to produce a new one; while the champions of the antiquated system all agree that 'the old is better.'

Some Christians of the primitive ages were not then, perhaps many of the present age are not now, aware, that he who overleaps the truth, errs as widely as he who falls short of it; nay, the danger is even greater, as it is more difficult to recede than to advance. It was the vain desire of overturning established truths, of being wiser than the wisdom of God, of being more perfect than the perfection of the Gospel, of giving new glosses to old opinions, and rejecting all opinions which did not hit their own distempered fancies; together with the temptation of being considered as the founders of a new school,—which gave rise to the Ebionites, the Cerinthians, the Marcionites, and various other sects; and which has continued to this day, to introduce successive heresies into the church of Christ.

Of the two classes above mentioned—those who think true religion a novelty, and those who are endeavouring to introduce a novel religion, though they are the very antipodes of each other, yet it is difficult to determine which has wandered most widely from the truth. Scylla has it wrecks as well as Charybdis. Though each thinks that the only way to safety is to recede as far as possible from the other, yet, by this increasing desire of mutual recession, they are in more danger of gradually approaching to each other, if not of finally meeting, than either intended or believed at first setting out.

In one quarter we hear the most consoling of all doctrines—the doctrine on which the great hinge of Christianity turns,—rejected as false, and its defenders derided, as if they were adopting it to be a substitute for virtuous practice. We hear one community spoken of by its professors as triumphantly bearing away from all others the proud distinction of *rationality*. It is a monopoly not to be allowed. If by rational religion is meant a religion singularly adapted to rational beings, no church on earth has a fairer claim to the appellation than the Church of England. It is rational to exercise our reason in examining and weighing the evidences of Christianity; and, having clearly proved the authority on which they are grounded, it is then rational to submit our reason to its doctrines. It is rational to believe that we are apostates from our original brightness; not only because we perceive it to be a scriptural doctrine, but because we see it in all around us, and feel it in all within us.

It is rational for a being conscious of its weakness, to desire to lean upon something that is strong; we therefore lean upon a rock, and that rock is Christ. Our church is a rational church;

for it is sober without coldness, and animated without enthusiasm. Its service unites the affections of the heart with the faculties of the mind; it teaches to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. Though it lays hold with a firmly grasping hand on the blessed doctrine of the atonement, yet it is so far from using this doctrine as a pretence for neglecting virtuous practice, that it draws from thence new motives, new sanctions, new encouragements. It teaches that without shedding of blood there is no remission for sin, while it declares that without repentance, and without holiness, there is no salvation for sinners.

The sound members of this church acknowledge that there are mysteries in our religion; but the same reason which employed its best energies in proving the Divine authority of Scripture, has convinced them that the secret things which belong to God must be adored now, and will be fully understood hereafter. The legitimate members of the church, for she has, it is to be feared, some spurious ones, are not surprised that in a revelation from heaven there should be mysteries, but they believe that these sacred mysteries are meant as exercises of faith to the probationers for Heaven; are meant to promote humility; which *they* consider, whatever others do, as a grand fundamental in religion. They do not pretend to know in what manner the Holy Spirit operates on the human heart; but they know that it does operate, because it produces that change of heart which they are not ashamed to call the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and which distinguishes the vital from the nominal Christian. They leave to those who have sufficient natural resources in their own minds, if such there be, to reject assistance which *they* fervently implore; assistance without which they, who think they stand, may finally fall.

These humble dependants on Divine grace come at length to attain, in addition to the external evidences of Christianity, an internal evidence in their own bosom, which, so far from giving them any elation of heart, any eccentricity of doctrine, any irregularity of conduct, preserves them from each while it affords them 'all joy and peace in believing.'

But while we put in the fair claim of our church to rational religion, we do not make an exclusive pretension to this, or any other excellence. Every human institution bears on it some marks, greater or less, that it is human, of course imperfect; and it is sufficient to guard *us* against the folly of such a pompous assumption to know, that an erroneous church not only assumes the appellation of *infallible* itself, but gives it also to its infirm, mutable, human head, to a being certain of death, and liable to sin.

But if we do not claim soundness as well as rationality, for our exclusive possession, we are more likely to perpetuate both, than the best societies of separatists. All that is good in our church is likely to be secured to it by the fence of an establishment. An enclosure is not so likely to be broken in upon from without, as a society planted in the waste. We are likely, I say, to be secured from the introduction of new dogmas, as well as to be preserved in our long adopted principles. The pale which encircles our church, and the formularies which belong to it, do not leave it open to the experiments of new projectors, to the incursions of fresh innovators. Above all it is enriched by a great mass of the Divine treasures of Scripture; the spirit of which is also expanded in our collects and prayers, so that, as we have observed in another place, if the pulpit should in any instance unhappily degenerate in doctrine, the desk will still furnish a perpetual antidote. It may indeed deserve the name of the *establishment* not only as being the rational religion, but as being built on the foundation of the everlasting Gospel, on the doctrines taught by prophets and evangelists, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

In another of the quarters alluded to, the more novel system, we hear much of opinions but little of practice; much of doctrines, but little of holiness; much of faith—a disproportioned and unproductive faith—but little of repentance. These grand ingredients, which, when severally coupled together, make up the sum and substance of Christianity,—these joint essentials, which Saint Paul preached invariably, and which by never separating, he preached effectually, are now considered as separate interests, and severed from each other as having no necessary connection.

We are very far from the injustice of accusing those who propagate doctrines which are evidently unscriptural, of being themselves unholy. In some of the leading characters we fully believe the contrary to be the case; but the obvious effect of such doctrines on those who hear them, is not only to lessen their value for practical preaching, but to lead them to consider personal holiness as making no part of the things which accompany salvation.

Those who are at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history, must know that in the most flourishing ages of the church, even when Christianity was best understood and most successfully practised, errors of opinion most readily started up, the ephemeral fungus of a luxuriant soil; they were frequently the suggestion of fanciful and mistaken, rather than of immoral men. Our great spiritual adversary, who successfully employs the *vicious* as the corruptors of morals, knows it to be a stale and fruitless device to make them his agents for misleading the judgment and bewildering the imagination; and therefore, by a refinement of ingenuity, prompts the more virtuous to the accomplishment of spiritual mischiefs. Moral men are his selected instruments for broaching novel, enticing, and dangerous opinions. These moral but wayward persons seem to have overlooked the fine supplication of the Apostle, that God would "establish, strengthen, settle them." These terms, which indeed are not synonymes, but shades:—these terms, a noble climax, implying not equality, but gradation, are now inverted. Every move in the new machine seems to shake, weaken, unsettle. One pin in the old system is pulled out after another, till the whole magnificent fabric, if its security depended on them, would fall to the ground. The patriarch Jacob has shown us in the character of his vacillating

son Reuben, how destructive instability is of excellence.

We are assured that the change in these ever varying theories are so frequent, that to confute them would be as difficult as unnecessary; for that which by some of the party is insisted on in one week, gives way in the next to some wider deviation; so that he who might wish to animadvert on some existing evil must be as rapid as its inventor, he must

'Catch ere it fall the Cynthia of the minute.'

If in religious contemplation or discussion, we once give the reins to fancy, if we cherish every seducing thought, merely because it is new, if we set up for complete independence of opinion, if we assume individual release from all the ties that hold Christian society together, if we permit ourselves to plunge into the unfathomable ocean of discovery, without compass or rudder, there is no saying where we may land; it may be on the shore we now dread. Many of these leaders differ in opinion, but each seems to lay as exclusive a claim to truth as the Pope himself; but as the latter was equally infallible when there was one Pope at Avignon and another at Rome, so the infallibility here seems to be lodged by each in himself, only with this variation, that these last begin by differing from each other, till in their more advanced progress they come to differ from themselves.

Is not the recent secession founded on a kind of spiritual democracy, an overturning system; an aversion to whatever is established; a contempt of authority; an impatience of subordination, a thirst for dictatorship; with this difference, that these religious dissidents loose the rein of their self-government, instead of those of their country.

We know to what a degree the love of novelty, the longing to see any thing they have not seen before, though the object be ever so disgusting, is carried by our countrymen. The poet who best knew human nature, who best painted the characters of Englishmen, said, 'In England any monster will *make* (be the making of) a man.' This is so true, that a dwarf, a giant, an unnatural birth in an animal, will afford delight; the greater the distortion the higher the pleasure. We have seen to what excess this passion for what is novel and monstrous may be carried, in the instance of a late preposterous prophetess, a creature born and bred among the dregs of the people, with nothing to recommend her but ignorance, presumption, extravagance and blasphemy; yet did this woman not only make numberless proselytes among her vulgar equals, but obtained advocates among those from whom better things might have been expected. But it is the very absurdity which is the attraction. Such preposterous pretences being obviously out of the power of human means to accomplish, the extravagance is believed to be supernatural. It is the impossibility which makes the assumed certainty. The epilepsy of Mahomet confirmed his claims to inspiration.

Extravagance in religion is a kind of spiritual empiricism, which is sure for a time to lay hold on the vulgar. The ignorant patient in both cases, who frequently pays little attention to the established physician, is sure to be attracted by any new nostrum from the laboratory of the irregular prescriber: he is resorted to with more confidence in proportion to the reputed violence of his catholicon; and he who despised the sober practitioner, swallows without scruple the most pernicious drug of the advertising professor.

Without the slightest desire to detract from the personal character of our new empirics in divinity, we may be allowed to suspect that their education, and early habits of life, had not altogether qualified them for the arduous undertaking of new modelling a church. It is true, that 'the erudition of a (common) Christian man' is not required to be very profound, but surely that of a Christian reformer should be something more than moderate.

The lapse of three centuries has added little clearness to the lucid exposition of Christian truth as exhibited in the writings of those reformers by whom the doctrines of the Church of England were modelled. Whatever defects might have escaped the notice of those eagle-eyed sifters and examiners of Christian truth, when they rescued it from the rubbish under which it lay almost buried, would not these defects have been detected, pointed out, rectified, by the penetrating mind of Bishop Jewel in his renowned challenge at Paul's Cross, or in his celebrated Apology for the Church of England? Would they not have been expunged or purified by the judicious Hooker, that bulwark of the establishment, in his immortal writings on *ecclesiastical polity*, and on *justification*? Would they have eluded the observation and correction of Archbishop Usher, that prodigy of erudition?

We need not be again told the well-known fact, that there may be abundant learning where there is little enlightened piety; but in these glorious champions of the faith of Christ, and of the Protestant church, learning was only a secondary excellence. Various and profound as were their acquirements, they were conscientiously devoted to the purpose of advancing and confirming the scarcely established church. Can we believe that Ridley, Hooper, Cranmer and a long list of such distinguished men, would have made the sacrifices they actually made, without scrupulously examining into the momentous truths they professed to believe; that they would have suffered the most cruel tortures, rather than renounce the doctrines of a church to which they were first ornaments and then martyrs?—'There were giants in those days:' but to say no more of them, nor of the succession of profound divines and eminent scholars who succeed them, 'men of stature also'—would it not be casting a severe reflection on these bright luminaries of our country and church, to believe that the great truths of the gospel which were hid from these skilful and acute indagators, were reserved to be brought to light by half a dozen persons in the nineteenth century; that to men, most of them bred to secular pursuits, and living antecedently in secular habits, should be reserved the honour of detecting, not trifling faults, not imperfections from which perhaps no human institution is exempt, but radical errors, but fundamental mischiefs, affecting the very vitals of our reli-

gion? If these evils really exist, if they indeed escaped the penetration, eluded the vigilance, and mocked the wisdom of those mighty champions, then to say those holy men were blameable, is saying little: they were indeed ideots, voluntarily to suffer a violent death, rather than renounce a church too erroneous for the new reformers, not only in which to preach, but in which to remain.

The penetrating sense of Luther seems not only to have exposed all existing, but to have anticipated all future heresies, especially when he inveighs against that which declared that '*The Ten Commandments ought to be taken out of the Church!*'

The Coryphœus of the doctrine of faith, in contradiction to the new system, says: 'Faith is by no means an ineffective quality, but possesses so great excellency, that it utterly confounds and destroys all the foolish dreams and imaginations of sophisters; but if works only are taught, faith is lost.' 'But if nothing but faith is inculcated, carnal men begin to dream that there is no need of good works.' Again: 'If, indeed, faith saves us without works, let us have no anxiety about good actions; let us only take care and believe, and we may do what we please. It is true,' adds he, 'that Paul tells you, that faith without works justifies; however he also tells you, that a true faith after it has justified, does not permit a man to slumber in ignorance, but that it worketh by love.' Again: 'You now see, that though it is faith alone which justifies, yet that faith alone is not sufficient.'

There is not a single doctrine of the New Testament which does not involve practical consequences. The necessity of holiness, now unhappily not insisted on, is more exalted by the death of Christ than by all other means that ever were devised. God's hatred of sin is more forcibly expressed by the sacrifice of his Son, than it could have been by any other method, although we do not presume to set limits to infinite power.

Yet this most glorious doctrine, this cleanser from all sin, may be converted by the manner in which it is administered into an open door to that licentiousness which it is its special design, its obvious tendency, and when truly received on scripture grounds, its natural consequences, to cure.

But if men came to the perusal of the Bible with certain prepossessions of their own, instead of a simple and sincere desire after Divine truth; if, instead of getting their obliquities rectified by trying them by this strait line, they venture to bend the strait line till it fits their own crooked opinions; if they are determined to *make* between them a conformity which they do not *find*, they are not far from concluding that they *have* found it. By such means, a very little knowledge, and a great deal of presumption, has been the ground-work of many a novel and pernicious system.

Systems, indeed, there will be as many as they are novel and pernicious; for though men are as tenacious of error, for a time, as if their convictions were as strong as they could be if it were truth, yet the persuasion of error is not likel to be so lasting. As no error can be so irresistible as a known truth, it cannot long carry the same weight with it. He who adopted it, at length finding it not to go, as we say, on all fours, is more likely to plunge into a succession of errors, each deeper than the other, than to return to the truth which he has abandoned. Whether the pride of not going back, or the hope that, in his wider wanderings, he may extricate himself, it is hard to say; for error is as endless as truth is powerful.—Some minds are so constituted, that it is easier to them to produce objections to truth, than to embrace it; they therefore resist truth, when they might resist the obstacles which prevent their receiving it. Our adoption of error as naturally proceeds from our abuse of reason, as our adoption of truth from the right use of it. The question, to a plain Christian, seems to be settled by this declaration of our Lord: 'He that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.'

As, in many of those to whom we have been alluding, their aberrations seems to have been occasioned rather by the vagrancy of the imagination, than the corruption of the heart, we are not without hope that they may yet retrace their steps; that the way they have lost may be recovered; that their involution in this labyrinth may not be past extrication; that Divine grace may furnish a clue to lead them back to the plain, obvious, intelligible meaning of the unsophisticated word of God. That this may be the case, is the cordial wish and prayer of many who loved and respected them before they were unhappily led astray, by erratic fancies, into these seducing theories.

There is no method which the subtle adversary of mankind has not devised to injure religion. When the church is at a low ebb, when she is sunk in forms and outward observances; when zeal is asleep, and all seems safe because all is still, he sometimes rouses her, but it is to wrong purposes: it is not to advance the interests of Christianity, but to bend his force against some symptoms of its returning spirit, which begin to break out: these symptoms of incipient zeal he calls enthusiasm, though an evil which perhaps, in that stage of the church, does not exist; he, however, strives to prevent the existence not of enthusiasm but of zeal, that the frigid may enjoy their doze, and not be reproached by the threatened exertions in the quarter which is beginning to open its eyes.

At another period when the church is beginning to be triumphant, he sends out his favourite engine, persecution, with his fagot and his axe, burning where he could not refute, and subduing by force what he could not silence by argument.

He is now pursuing a different course.—The same malignant spirit which once laboured to drive men from Christianity by martyrdom, now draws them from it by sophistry. He now deteriorates truth instead of persecuting it; and as the process is less revolting, it succeeds better. Men are no longer terrified into error, but coaxed into it. They are not frightened, but wheedled out of their belief. Their understandings become so bewildered, that they are persuaded that every new advance in heresy is a fresh step to-

wards truth. Advantage is made even of their prejudices, which become more deeply rooted by the very change which they are made to believe is to extirpate them. New converts, who once valued themselves on their incredulity, have become credulous to excess; and those who were previously indifferent to sober religion, are led to swallow the wildest perversions of Christianity, to adopt opinions which she as heartily rejects as she did their former unbelief.

Some subjects are placed out of the reach of the human mind. Presumptuous spirits lose themselves by attempting to pierce through forbidden bounds; by endeavouring to explain things beyond the limits of created comprehension, they subvert the truth they pretend to serve, they involve themselves in the very difficulties they undertake to clear. The humble Christian, like the seraphim, 'covers his face' before the infinite Majesty of Heaven, and exclaims, 'O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' 'Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself.'

We are not called upon to unravel intricacies, but to hold fast the form of sound words. While to the ill-informed these new teachers appear profound because they are unintelligible, they remind those of better judgment of certain animals, who, burrowing in shallow ground, just beneath the surface of the earth, fancy they are deep only because they are dark.

Many a metaphysical reformer, by the manner of conducting his system, so exposes and defeats his own cause, as to resemble in fate, though we say not with any similarity of invention, the Neapolitan atheist Vanini, who, with eleven others of the same class (we presume the number to be a match for the twelve apostles) endeavoured to establish a regular college of infidelity. The object was nearly the same with that of the late atheistical school in France; and by having the priority of two centuries, they robbed that recent rabble of the meritorious claim to original wickedness.

Vanini's object was to exterminate the very idea of a God, and for this he adopted a most singular method. He undertook to prove there was no God, by stating the general idea of God. He strangely fancied that to define the idea was to destroy it; and that to pretend to say what God is, was the surest way to disprove his existence! His definition is so artfully made out, and part of it so ingeniously written, that while he thought he was drawing only the creature of his imagination, it appears as if he were enthroning rather than deposing his Creator. A marvellous delusion to argue against the being of God from the very magnitude of his perfections! Let the delirious metaphysics of modern times alone, and we had almost said they will also argue themselves into the abyss of forgetfulness.*

We want more simplicity in the exercise of our religion; we want to be reformed by it, and not to reform it; we have need to be sent back to our first rudiments. We should imitate the plainness and uncomplicated method of the New Testament, where the doctrines are few, but of importance inestimable, infinite, eternal! We should examine the grounds of our faith by this unerring guide, and not by the pullulations of our own visionary fancies. We want to be sent back to elementary principles. We need not even think it beneath our wisdom to be directed by that familiar summary, the Apostles' Creed. It were well if we fixed our own faith by the articles comprised in, and enclosed by, that safe compendium instead of turning it over to our children as if we were got above its beggarly elements. Even the way-faring man cannot stray while he is contented to keep close within this hedge.

Many do not virtually adopt its first simple declaration, 'I believe in God;' for to believe in God on the Christian scheme, is not merely to believe in a first cause, is not merely to believe in His existence, we must also believe in His attributes, His promises, His threatenings, His Son, His word, His Spirit; to believe in those attributes especially which harmoniously meet in the glorious union of truth and mercy, the blessed combination of righteousness and peace in the person of his Divine Son; those promises which are eternal life to as many as keep his commandments; those threatenings which say to the ungodly, 'Depart from me I never knew you;' that holiness without which no man shall ever see his face.

A bad principle is of much more extensive mischief than a bad example; the latter it is true, like a conflagration, has a tendency to destroy whatever comes within its reach; but a pernicious principle, like the variolous matter, may be conveyed to any distance, and infect the patient, though he had never come in contact with him from whose eruption it was taken. 'It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand, for they have destroyed thy law!'

But it is not the entertaining a dangerous opinion, it is the rage of proselyting to new opinions, which constitutes the most malignant part of the mischief; an erroneous doctrine not propagated, hurts none but him who holds it but by propagating it to unsettle the minds of multitudes to deteriorate the Gospel, and to disturb the peace and unity of the church, is surely no light evil, especially in a country like ours, proverbial for its credulity and love of novelty; and in a church like ours, which has been reformed, sifted, and purified, beyond the example of any other in the Christian world.

The everlasting edifice of the Gospel is founded on a rock, whose stability neither storms can shake, nor waves undermine.—Nor can any contrivances of man improve the beauty of its superstructure. Its depths cannot be fathomed by our short line, nor its height fully apprehended by our short sight! Christianity then is no appropriate field for the perplexities of metaphysics, nor the industry of new discoverers. This brief title of the Bible—The Word of God—excludes the censures of all cavillers, annihilates the emendations of all critics!

It is with unfeigned sorrow the writer has witnessed the rise and progress of the new community. If she knows any thing of her own heart, the preceding remarks have not been dictated by a censorious spirit. But it may be said,

* For a further account of this metaphysical atheist, see Mr. Saurin's sermon on 'The deep things of God.'

she was not called upon for any such impertinent animadversions. The probability of such a reproof makes her feel herself obliged to account for the liberty she has taken.

Those who have condescended to look into her former writings, need not be reminded, that she has through life, in a considerable degree, though not exclusively, devoted her humble talents to the service of her own sex; and has conscientiously, though feebly, laboured to be useful to their best interests in every way she could devise. She has endeavoured to strengthen them in the pursuit of what was right, and they have had the goodness to bear with her when she has reminded them of any aberrations from that pursuit.

Though the deep interest she has taken in their credit and their welfare has by no means invested her with a right of interference on the present painful occasion, yet it would not have been consistent with her antecedent practice, to overlook a circumstance in which they are so deeply involved.

It has excited the most lively feelings of regret in many minds, to hear, in a recent instance, of the departure of some ladies of consideration, from that reserve and delicacy so peculiarly the characteristics of their sex, and so naturally appendant to their own respectable characters and situation in life.—They appear not only to have entered very warmly into all the tenets of the seceding school, but to labour very assiduously for their propagation. They are, it seems, not only followers, but joint leaders in the several departments of the government of the seceding party.

Tenderness of heart, warmth of feeling, and liveliness of imagination, form a most interesting part in the composition of an amiable woman; but the qualities which adorn, are also the qualities which mislead. The very attractions which cause them to please, may become snares. If not carefully directed, they give a wrong bias to the character, and a dangerous tendency to the conduct. They lead their possessor more widely astray than is commonly the case with those who are destitute of these pleasing powers.

That providential economy which has clearly determined that women were born to share with men the duties of private life, has as clearly demonstrated, that they were not born to divide with them in its public administration. If, then, they were not intended to command armies in war, nor to direct cabinets in peace, to legislate in the senate, or debate at the bar—doubtless they were not intended to be public teachers of religion, to be makers of canons for a new church, nor to invent dogmas to controvert an old one; nor to be professors of proselytism, nor wrangling polemics, nor conductors of controversy, nor settlers of disputes—disputes which will continue to be agitated as long as men have hot heads and proud hearts; as long as they possess vanity or curiosity, impatience of restraint, or a love of opposition; a weariness of sober truths, and a thirst after the fame to be acquired by their subversion.

Why will women of sense, then, defeat their providential destination? why desert their proper sphere, in which they were intended to benefit, to please, even to shine at least as stars of the *second* magnitude? Why fly from their prescribed orbit? Why roam in useless and eccentric wandering,

"And, comet-like, rush lawless through the void,

and then, having for a season astonished with their false and momentary blaze, fall disregarded and forgotten?

These well-meaning ladies would be among the last to use their allotted measure of grace and accomplishment to any purpose which they believed to be improper; yet they require to be told, that neither should their talents be exerted to the purposes of spiritual seduction; that they should not be employed to disturb the faith, to shake by dispute, or weaken by persuasion, the steadiness of persons who, without their endowments, are perhaps in a safer state.

But though the writer cannot hope that these observations will produce any effect on those who have already embarked on this sea, without a shore, and without a bottom—happy would she be, if they might become the means of preserving one inexperienced female from the perils to which novelty, curiosity, and pressing invitation too easily allure. The sure preservatives from this danger are to cultivate deep humility and self-distrust, to keep clear of the very threshold of innovation, to avoid the first step; for all the subsequent ones are easy. Let her bear in mind, that, once seduced, she may find, that 'when she would inherit the blessing, she may be rejected, and find no place of repentance, though she may seek it carefully with tears.'

Ill effects of the late Secession.

Among the evils to which the late secession has contributed, those we are about to mention are of no light nature. It has been the means of exciting a sort of spiritual vanity, of awakening a desire of departing from received opinions, in certain young persons, who may be designated by the name of premature instructors. It has increased the alienation of the lower orders from the church; it has afforded to some who are not favourable to serious piety, a pretence for indiscriminately classing together men of different views, characters, and principles.—Among the more respectable, it has stirred up a spirit of debate and controversy by no means friendly to the cause of genuine Christianity. We shall mention these effects in their order.

There is scarcely a greater mistake in morals, than is committed by those who habitually speak of vanity as a trifling fault, as a small pass not worth guarding. There is perhaps scarcely an error which is so generally adopted, and so carelessly overlooked. It finds its way into characters of every species, and almost into every individual of the species. There is not only the vanity of beauty, of rank, of riches, of learning, of talents, but, as we have already observed, the vanity of religion.

A bold familiarity with Scripture an unhal-

owed touching of the sacred ark, not as formerly by sceptics and scoffers only, but by persons professing, and we believe intending to be religious, are, it is to be feared, becoming too common. This, like many other of our offences, has its foundation in vanity. It is obvious that an unwillingness to be taught, and an impatience to teach, marks the character of the present day.

There is a scion from this presumptuous stock, which perhaps has not had sufficient time to grow, in order to become generally known, but which is beginning to sprout up in certain provincial towns and villages. There is a growing disposition in a few arrogant young men to read the Bible with their own glosses and interpretations, and to aim at proselyting, and 'taking captive' not only 'silly women' but silly girls. Several of these persons, as soon as they began to open their eyes on the importance of religion, or rather before they were broad awake to its truths, have undertaken this gratuitous tuition. Instead of taking time to promote their own advancement, instead of learning wisdom by an increasing discovery of their own ignorance; instead of improving in Christian knowledge by the only legitimate methods, diligent study of the Bible with the aid of the soundest commentators, both accompanied with fervent prayer for that light they profess to seek,—without consulting able ministers—without taking this straight and obvious road,—on their own very slender stock they set up for teachers themselves. Instead of looking to the experienced and the wise, they collect a little group to look up to them, thus inverting the Apostle's observation—for *they* 'when for the time they seek to be teachers, have need to be taught themselves, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' If this spiritual vanity should flourish, we shall soon have none to learn; all will be teachers.

Thus the raw and rash Christian, confidently jumps over all the intermediate steps between the enquirer and the instructor, and despising the old gradual approach to the sacred temple, despising the study of books, of men, and of himself, starts up at once a full-grown divine;—the novice seizes the professor's chair, erects himself into a scholar without literature, and a theologian without theology. On the strength of a few texts, ill understood, and worse applied, he undertakes to give his young neighbours new views of the Bible, and without eyes himself, sets up for a guide of the blind.

These young persons in reading the Scriptures seem to be setting out on a voyage of discovery of something new, rather than on a course of observation on what their precursors have done for them. They search, not with devout enquiry, but fearless curiosity; they look out for passages written in a different connection, and applied to different purposes, and then try to prove that they produce not consecutive reasoning, that they do not establish the generally received doctrines. How should they? They were never intended to produce the one, or to establish the other. They bring together propositions which have no relation, and which require different proofs, and then triumph in the supposed opposition of what was never intended to agree.

'Thus fools rush in where angels fear to tread.'

Suffer a few friendly hints. Though Holy Scripture was given to be searched, it was not given to be criticised. It was 'written for our learning,' not for our cavilling; it was given not to be pertly scrutinized, but to be 'inwardly digested;' not to make us wise in our own conceits, but 'to make us wise unto salvation.' It is not to be endured to hear questions on which hang all our hopes and our fears, speculated upon as if they were a question of physics or history, and explained till they become contradictions.

Men taught of God, and possessing those depths of erudition which qualified them to teach others, depend upon it, have left nothing for your discovery except the discovery of your own insufficiency. If there are obscurities they will not be cleared by such shallow expositors. The sun of righteousness will not be made to shine brighter by the light of your farthing candle.

Boldness in religion, we repeat, is one of the great evils of the present day. The more we cavil the less we shall obey. We may explain truths till we come to deny them. We may be so involved in intricacies of our own weaving, that we may end by opposing the doctrine we undertook to clear. Oh! there is no security like a humble mind; a mind always distrusting its own wisdom, and always confiding in the wisdom of God.

Why, then, will not the premature instructor wait till he is himself instructed? Why not look up for information on difficult and disputed points to wiser and older heads? Why not in their little parties turn their attention to practical points, rather than to speculative niceties? Why not cultivate that self-inspection and heart-humbling prayer which would cure those conceits that lead to a critical, and often end in a sceptical spirit; such habits would best preserve them from that inflation of heart which arises from the vanity of some supposed new discovery, in a religion which was given us by the Spirit of God.

The Scripture no where teaches us to indulge this audacious curiosity; it stirs up no eagerness for pushing speculation beyond its legitimate bounds. It furnishes no invitation for ranging beyond the limited sphere allotted to our imperfect human condition. Its incitements are not irritations but encouragements. The Bible wisely represses all that spiritual vanity which would dive into unprofitable, because impenetrable mysteries. It teaches us all that is necessary for us to learn, and there it stops. It teaches what is of prime importance for us to know,—that we are fallen creatures. It shows what we ought to *believe* in order to our being rescued from this state of apostacy. It instructs us in all that is necessary for us to *do* to be restored to the favour of God, which by sin we had forfeited. It is enough that it lays open the disease, presents the remedy, and offers God's Holy Spirit to render it effectual. In short, it reveals all that as probationary beings

we should desire to know, and of all we know it expects us to make a practical use.

The present is, especially among the lower ranks, an age of rebuke and blasphemy; and what is so likely to augment the popular hostility to Christianity, and neglect of the established church, which is founded upon it, as when they see some of its ministers reprobating at one time, the church which they warmly defended at another?—when they see them actually renouncing it as unchristian, and setting up a new system in opposition to it? Where, then, is truth to be found, may not even the more sober amongst the people say, if it is not found in that church, in defence of which so many of her divines, so many of her bishops, were led to the scaffold and the stake? Will not the loose and careless be likely to be confirmed in impiety, when they see these men, who were fostered in her bosom, who had subscribed to their belief in her articles, who had been warm beyond their fellows in the admiration of her liturgy, her doctrines, and her discipline,—when they see these men not only desert her altars, but take up arms against her; when they behold a perpetual conflict between Christian ministers?—for a church that is attacked must be defended—will they not think that an establishment which is so frequently assailed, which requires such continual vindication from which there are so many recent deserters, must needs be an erroneous and unsound church, and even the Scriptures on which it is founded, uncertain, if not false?

What is so likely as this defection to give confidence, without the least intention of doing so, to that spirit of infidelity which used to skulk in corners, and stab from behind a mask, but now avows itself boldly, bares its unblushing front to public gaze, spurns at law as well as decency, openly defies government, whom it used to fear, as well as God, whom it never feared?

Was it not enough that these low, designing demagogues—men who think one religion as good as another, and no religion best of all,—was it not enough that these open violators of order, truth, and justice, should, as the most probable means to accomplish their political mischiefs, endeavour to overturn the church, by bringing her creeds, and her other holy services, into contempt; insulting, by their profane parodies, all that is grave, and rendering ridiculous all that is good? Yet, from such men, such attempts excite our regret and astonishment less than those we have been contemplating. How grievous is it, when persons of a totally different description are, perhaps undesignedly, contributing to help on the work which, we are persuaded they abhor!—when decorous and religious men, though by other devices, and with other weapons, may be contributing to accomplish the work of these vulgar politicians, and assisting, in no inconsiderable degree, to discredit the church which the others are labouring to subvert!

Nay; in one respect the better men are doing the worse deed; for the factitious assailants of the church injure those alone who were injured before; for, by the grossness of their attacks, they shock all who are not totally given up to impiety; while, in the present instance, those more decent characters are more likely to be led astray, who have shown some disposition to be serious; and are, therefore, in more danger of being misled by the specious subtleties, and the assumed tone of confident security, of these religious dogmatists.

The inexperienced and the wavering—those who are unconfirmed in their principles, together with others who have their religion to seek, and who like to have one pointed out to them which will not disturb their repose by the severity of its practical injunctions, nor the self-denying spirit of its tendencies, are likely to be led astray by these false lights; while the sober and self-distrusting Christian will only be driven, by these alarming novelties, to adhere more closely to the humbling and consistent doctrines of the New Testament,—will, with deeper prostration of heart, implore the aid of the Holy Spirit, not only to lead him into all truth, but to *keep* him in it. Such a one will find that it does not require profound knowledge, or deep learning, to perceive the awful dangers of the presumptuous innovations which lead to those perilous subtleties—which terminate in these bold conclusions. He will see that common sense, an humble mind, and a competent acquaintance with Scripture, are all that is wanting to discover that the Bible, and the novelties of the seceding community cannot both be right.

But the evil does not end here; for some of the adversaries of serious piety, are, it is to be feared, disposed to take a most unfair advantage of this secession; and the very circumstance of that separation which ought to have rescued men who firmly adhere to the church, and to the principles on which it is founded, from suspicion, increases it, and causes them to be involved in one common charge of extravagance and error, with men whose opinions they abhor; whereas, when the vessel is assailed by an unexpected storm, instead of throwing themselves out to sea in quest of imaginary safety, the tempest only makes the experienced Christian mariner cling the closer to his hold. Men of more than ordinary zeal and activity, then, should not be suspected of disaffection, unless they afford other, and more substantial reasons, for doubting their want of orthodoxy. Does it not look as if there were no soundness but in apathy, no security but in inertness?

One of the great evils of the times is rash judgment, indiscriminate attack, and a zeal for censure without examination; a not separating men who are materially dissimilar, but lumping them into one common reprobated mass, or, at best, speaking as if the difference were so little, that it was not worth the pains to separate them.

Perhaps there are no church communities in the world, that do not hold some doctrines in common. We are identified in some important points with the Church of Rome; but that does not blind us to its errors, nor does it prevent our keeping clear of them.—There are both rational and orthodox communities in our own country but our holding some opinions in common with

them, neither makes us adopt those opinions which we disapprove, nor condemn those who profess them, as if they held none that were right. Why, then, should not the case be the same in our own church?

This lumping system is not a little hard on the steady and orderly divine. It weakens the hands of the faithful pastor, when his auditors, who have just been hearing him speak the words of truth and soberness, find him, perhaps, in the next controversial pamphlet they take up, coupled with the half insane, and the wholly absurd. It is hard that the zealous Christian, who is at the same time a pattern of propriety and correct demeanor, should be dragged in to make common cause with those at whose principles he shudders. Yet these men of opposite characters, principles and pursuits, are forced into contact, are together plunged into the crucible of undistinguishing prejudice, and melted down together; all distinctions so lost in the fusion—the sober Christian so mixed with the fanatic, the temperate with the fiery, the regular with the eccentric, that they come out of the furnace blended into one common mass, and are reproduced as if formed of one common material.

Ours is also pre-eminently an age of controversy. Is not charity sometimes recommended with uncharitableness, and religion vindicated irreligiously? But are there not a thousand other subjects better calculated for its legitimate exercise? 'Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth,' on all other topics; but here, though one dash the other in pieces, he does not always escape unhurt himself. But shall the word of 'the High and Holy One, the word of Him who sitteth on the circle of the earth,' be made an arena for the combats of its puny inhabitants, whom the prophet represents by the most contemptible insect?

But although, as we have already observed, if truth be attacked, it must be defended, the Christian controvertist never engages in offensive war. He does not fight for victory, but truth. And the surest way for him to ascertain this, is, to examine the temper with which he defends it. Rivalry is not his motive, nor is railing his weapon.

If, as it is said, warfare is the natural state of man, let his hostility among Christians be directed to a foreign enemy; let them not engage in civil war. You have already 'provoked each other to good works,' which is part of the law; go on, and provoke each other to 'love, which is the fulfilling of the law.' Let both sides rejoice in the good done, without caring which does it. 'There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh in all.' If there is so much done separately, what a mighty mass of good would be produced by cordial co-operation? Let me not be accused of levity in applying the words of the poet,

> The Douglas and the Percy both together,
> Were confident against a world in arms.

We know that, in the sight of God he is not the most successful champion who may have given most falls to his adversary; but he who has obtained the most victories over his own spirit. And *he* will be found, in the great and tremendous day of reckoning, to have been the most valiant sodier of Jesus Christ, not who has been the fiercest combatant in the field of controversy, but who shall have brought most glory to God, and most soul, to heaven.

If we made, as surely we ought to make, the Holy Scripture our standard of judging, as well as of believing, of charity as well as of faith, of brotherly kindness as well as of orthodoxy;—if we brought the Bible to be the constant arbiter of our debates, as well as the professed rule of our lives, we should attack nothing with warmth but what that Bible condemns. All differences of opinion in which God has not set to His seal that it is false, should be treated with candour; men should not then make their own 'purged eyes' the universal medium of clear vision, they should not vilify others for seeing the same topics with other optics. Want of charity is probably no less a fault than the one we may be reviling; and does not a want of discrimination, or rather does not that blindness which is inspired by prejudice, lead to that deficiency in candour which widens the difference? To profess opinions of which Scripture neither commands nor prohibits our belief; ought not to set at irreconcilable variance beings who are equally candidates for heaven. In that abode of perfect peace and perfect love, no small portion of the promised felicity may arise from our being of no party.

A difference in opinion on points on which the Holy Spirit has been silent, on which no declaratory sentence in Scripture has been pronounced, is surely no ground for the triumph of superiority in those who maintain them, nor for supercilious contempt in those who reject them. Is it not putting matters of minor importance in the place of essentials? while perhaps by the disputants on both sides, essentials are not always held with so firm a grasp, or at least are not debated with such unkind pertinacity.

We have hitherto alluded to difference of opinion between pious men, men who are in earnest in their religion. But are there not men of little piety to be found, who side with one or the other party, and become the hottest controvertists, while they take little real interest in vital religion; who oppose without belief, and defend without conviction, merely because they wish to be appended to that side which they happen to think the most creditable, most popular, or most profitable?

Let us then love in each other now what God loves in us, and bear with the rest.—The cultivation of this spirit of kindness would so sanctify the temper, that we should forgive and overlook those inferior matters in others, which might not exactly coincide with our own views and opinions.

These discrepancies in sentiment are perhaps permitted for mutual advantage; and the cultivation of a candid disposition may be carried to a wider extent, and a spirit of forbearance in action, than if there were no such thing as diversity of sentiment. By the consent and reciprocal operation of this spirit of Christian kindness, we shall be made more meet for that state where all will be of one mind as well as one heart

where charity will have its full consummation, and forbearance its full reward.

Let us then prepare ourselves, and each other, by the exercise of the one for the fruition of the other. Let God be all in all now, as He will be hereafter, and there will be no room left in the heart of a Christian for animosity, or unkindness towards his fellow Christians. A cordial agreement in those essentials to which the Gospel has annexed salvation, should swallow up all the present petty, but dividing distinctions. —Could this most desirable object be accomplished, then should we hope to see a renovation of that spirit which, in the early ages of the church, provoked even its enemies to exclaim with admiring wonder, *See how these Christians love one another!*

On the Exertions of Pious Ladies.

We are now about to tread, which we do with a fearful and timid step, on tender ground. It is with mingled respect and reluctance we venture to touch on certain delicate points which affect the sincerely pious; persons who equally avoid all eccentricity in doctrine, and negligence in practice; yet among whom little errors may hereafter creep in, the very consequence, perhaps, of that increasing and inestimable blessing, religious society. It is to be feared they may incur the hazard of raising in others objections against religion, by their honest zeal to promote it.

The persons to whom we presume to allude are of that sex, in which, perhaps, most piety is to be found, and who are in so many respects essentially advancing its cause.—Their services are so materially useful, that it would be a subject of deep regret, if, by any slight inadvertence, their value should ever be diminished. We are too often led to complain of *deficiencies* in religion; we are now to speak—not of its excess, for we believe there is no such thing—but rather to guard the truly pious against the possibility of inconveniences, which, should they arise, would be a diminution of their usefulness.

The thoughtless and dissipated indeed, who haunt unsocial crowds, and lay out their talents for that world which they have chosen for their portion, find their reward where they seek it, in the admiration of that world where they flutter and shine.—The others patiently wait for theirs in that single sentence, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' Yet though it is painful to say a syllable which might look like disapprobation when only caution is intended, may we hazard a few words, not of censure but of friendly intimation?

May not those large portions of time, and strength, and spirit, so generously spent abroad by zealous Christians, in the most noble exertions of religious charity, be sometimes suffered to entrench, in some measure, upon the imperious course of domestic life, upon those pleasing and sacred duties for which HOME is a name so dear? May they not be so exhausted by external concerns, that they may be in dangor of entering with diminished interest on the retired exercises of the closet. All business, even religious business, is apt to produce a hurry and bustle in the mind, and an agitation in the spirits, which the most serious persons lament, as being attended with some disqualification for personal improvement. 'My mother's children gave me their vineyards to keep, but mine own vineyard have I not kept,' was the pathetic lamentation of the ancient church. They had engaged her in labours and difficulties which she feared had in some measure impeded the progress of her own spiritual concerns. It was in her own house, at Bethany, that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. We fully admit, however, not only the complete *compatibility*, but the expediency, of uniting what we owe to those abroad, and to ourselves and families at home; the highest characters are those who combine both. We are not combatting, but applauding a zeal, which we fervently hope may never be suppressed, if it should ever require to be somewhat regulated.

There is no part of Christian duty which more requires us to look well to the motive by which our actions are set a-going. It is of importance to examine whether our most useful, if busy pursuits, are not influenced by a natural fondness for bustle, an animal activity, a love of notice. Whether even the charitable labours grow not more from a restless spirit than from real piety. Let us observe, however, that though these defective motives may at first excite the zeal of some, yet by a perseverance in well-doing, assisted by humble prayer, the motive may at length become as pure as the act is undoubtedly right.

It is asserted, but we trust with more severity than justice, that there is a growing tendency in some truly excellent persons to introduce show and display in their religion; a tendency, not quite consistent with the interior, spiritual nature of Christianity. It is not so much an evil *we* are guarding against, as the appearance of evil. Their sex, like their religion, is of a sober character; and the tendency to which we are alluding, may create a suspicion that religion, even among good people, is not so much considered as a thing between God and their own soul, as we know it really is; for we are far from suspecting the secret communion with their God and Saviour is not considered as their primary duty. And we are willing to believe that the effect of this duty will always be visible in producing that sobriety and simplicity, which so conspicuously, and so beautifully distinguish the religion of the New Testament.

The religion of Jesus is utterly without parade, it effects no publicity. It is enough for his servants to believe that their heavenly Father, who sees them in secret, sees them with an approving eye.

As they have got above acting from the fear of man, the next step is to get above acting for his praise;—the excessive applause and commendation of their Christian friends begin, in reality, still more to be watched against than the reproach of the irreligious. The one teaches them to be circumspect, the other may in time induce them to believe that circumspection is no longer necessary. This negligence, if it do not make them do wrong, may lead them to be too much elated with doing what is right.

But there are higher motives for the use of discreet reserve in the Christian's mind than what regards merely their personal character. However pure in motive, however innocent in action, they must be careful not to have their good evil spoken of. They must be scrupulously cautious of not bringing the least reproach on the cause dearest to their affections. Pious persons cannot but know, that with the utmost care to avoid adding to the offence, which Christian truth, however discreetly exhibited, necessarily gives, that many are looking out for pretences to discredit not only the professor but the profession itself. But if they should hereafter see any of those improprieties for which they are looking out; if any indiscretion should be found where it is sedulously sought, Christianity would suffer and impiety triumph.

We sincerely hope that certain sharp sighted observers, who are keenly on the watch for any thing that may discredit serious piety, who are peeping in at every crevice, through which they think they may detect any real or supposed ground of censure, may never be gratified with the discovery of what they so industriously seek. But it is obvious, that where they can detect no substantial fault, they take comfort in finding a foible; where there is no deformity they triumphantly carry away a blemish, and are ready to make the most of the slightest imperfection. And a speck which would not be perceived in an ordinary form, is conspicuous on that which is white and pure.

This, by a little perversion, and not a little exaggeration, not only of fact but of conjecture, is propagated till it becomes a mischief. In the detection of the slightest flaw in characters of eminent piety, they go away rejoicing, as if they had found some hidden treasure. And it is well perhaps, even for the best Christians, that there are such critical inspectors; and the knowledge that they are watched will answer an excellent purpose, if it set them on watching themselves.

Am I then an enemy to Christian exertion? God forbid! It is the glory of our age, that among the most useful and zealous servants of our Divine Master, are to be found, of 'devout and honourable women not a few.' Ladies, whose own education not having been limited to the harp and the sketch-book, though not unskilled in either, are competent to teach others what themselves have been taught; who disdain not to be employed in the humblest offices of Christian charity, to be found in the poorest cottage, at the bed-side of the sick and dying; whose daughters, if not the best *waltzers*, are the best *catechists;* whose houses are houses of prayer, whose closets are the scene of devout meditation; who, not contented with the stinted modish measure of a single attendance on public worship, so contrive to render the hours of repast subservient to those of duty, as to make a second visit to the temple of their God; and who endeavour to retain the odour of sanctity, shed on the sacred day, through the duties of the week.

But to pursue the subject in a different, though not distant direction, we cannot too much commend those valuable persons, whom neither fortune, rank, nor any temporal advantages have been able to seduce to follow those vain pursuits, whose light, and, in some cases, dangerous amusements, so eagerly sought by the votaries of pleasure. We cannot but admire, that all these energies which others are wasting in idle diversions, or employments little better than idleness, are, by those excellent persons, devoted to purposes of religion, and religious or useful charities.

If, indeed, like the females attached to the new school of theology, they deserted the established proprieties, and prescribed decorums, which have ever been considered as the safeguard, as well as the ornament, of their sex; if they assisted to propagate novel opinions; if they undertook to share the office of directors in spiritual concerns; if they diverted to public purposes, the talents given them for the more appropriate and subordinate, but not less useful offices of private life; if they attempted to clear difficulties in divinity, which the wisest and most learned men had approached with awe and reverence, and had receded, for fear of 'darkening counsel by words without knowledge; if they undertook to decide between contending creeds while they considered the commandments as antiquated—new-modelling the one and rescinding the other without ceremony; if they allowed themselves to determine the right and the wrong on points too abstruse, not only for female, but even for human intelligence, to decide upon, and to get rid of those they did not like or did not comprehend; if they had quitted plain, practical, intelligible religion, for misleading theories, and, like the apostate Galatians, 'removed from Him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;' if all these things had taken place, then they would indeed deserve even more censure than they have incurred; then, though we should pity their error and lament their apostacy, we should be among the last to apologise for the one, or excuse the other. It has been brought, as a charge, against the valuable ladies whose cause we are advocating, as if it were a departure from the delicacy of the sex, to attend at the annual meetings of certain religious and charitable societies; but we know not what reasonable objection can be made to their being modest and silent auditors on these occasions. They do not attend the resort of the unemployed or the ill-employed—they do not attend to hear the idle news of the neighbourhood, but to hear 'good news from a far country,'—news, which the angels in heaven stoop down to hear,—not the conversion of one sinner, but the conversion of many,—to hear that best news, the extension of Christianity to the extremities of the globe,—to hear that

> 'All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
> Flock to that light;'—

To hear

> 'That eastern Java to the farthest west,
> And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand.
> And worships!'

Compare now these inoffensive and quiet auditors, with the gay multitudes of their own sex

which crowd the resort of pleasure.—Here, they are the peaceful listeners; there, they are the busy performers. The others are not, as here, passive recipients of entertainment, but the entertainers, but the exhibitors. Yet, who among the worldly censures one of these classes? who, among the prejudiced does not censure the other?

So much for the difference in the *act;* let us examine the difference in point of *time;* for, as in our pleasurable pursuits, the consumption of time, that precious material of which life is made, forms a very considerable object, it cannot be thought unfair to compare the two classes on this ground.

Did the pursuits of both, in point of health, sobriety in dress, security of morals, preservation of delicacy, more nearly approach each other than the most strenuous advocate for dissipation can pretend; yet the prodigious inequality of the two as to the waste of time, must settle the matter at once with those who know the value of this fugitive, this irretrievable talent.

Compare then the few hours in the day, and the very few days in the years, given up by the one to these serious pleasures, with the uncounted hours of the countless nights, spent by the other in the *anti-social* crowds of turbulent pleasure—spent, wo will not say in the *midnight* parties, for that would give a false impression of the season of those amusements. The midnight hour was heretofore used proverbially to express *late* revelling.—But from the present inversion of hours, that would give an idea not only of dulness and vulgarity, but it would also rather designate the hour when company met, than when they parted. Midnight was once the time which *closed* the scene of dissipation; it is now that of *commencing* it. And it is scarcely extravagant to say, that the morning frequenters of the charitable meetings join them not many hours after the others return from the scene of their unquiet pleasures. In the one case, no neighbourhood is kept awake by unseasonable noise and knockings, no servants are exposed to corruptions abroad, nor robbed of quiet rest at home.

To turn from the metropolis to the provinces. Compare the little absences from home of ladies who inspect the concerns, and give instruction to the poor, with the long and frequent desertion of another class, not of home only, but of country!

Upon the whole though we would carefully guard against both, yet we must confess, in the present state of things, it is not so much a little excess in zeal in one quarter, as the visible growth of dissipation in another, which 'has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;' and truly happy should we be, if the pen of the ready writers, so frequently employed against the minor, would occasionally be exerted against the greater excess.

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The opening of the nineteenth century has been a period for the display of extraordinary energies, exerted in every sort of direction. They had been powerfully exerted in bringing on the late revolution. All the energies of France, whether in science, talent, wit, or wealth, were combined in one huge engine for the establishment of atheism on the proposed ruins of Christ and his kingdom. We hope this grand device was partly foiled, even *there.* In the general assault some skirmishes were fought in this country; but here a counter-attack was made. 'Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels, and prevailed.'—'The accuser of the brethren was cast down.'

Afterwards the human scourge of mankind in the same foreign country, by a singular energy of character, aided by an unprecedented combination of circumstances, to which the previous contempt of religion had led the way, projected the most exorbitant enterprises, and accomplished them by the most successful perseverance in every species of political and moral mischief. In imitation of one whom the enormity of his crimes would almost warrant us in calling his grand inspiror, his labours were perhaps more energetic, because 'his time was short.' Here again Michael made a counter-attack on the dragon. For it is to the same powerful energies, exerted in the contrary direction, that we may ascribe those numberless noble, and beneficial societies at home, which promise to effect a moral change in the condition, not of one country, not of one Continent, but of the whole Globe, and by which we hope finally, through the Divine blessing, 'to beat down Satan under our feet.'

But this has not only been a period for exerting the energies of countries and communities. They have been exerted under different situations by different characters, and to opposite purposes, by individuals; they have been remarkably exhibited in private persons, in a sex where energy is less expected to break out into fearless action; in Charlotte Corday, in Madame Roland, and other political enthusiasts abroad, all acting with the spirit of the heroines of pagan Rome, and actuated by a religion much resembling theirs.

At home, the best energies of the human mind have been exerted to the best purposes, by private individuals also, and exerted without any departure from modesty, prudence, and simplicity, the sacrifice of which would ill repay the accomplishment of the most popular action.

It would be unpardonable in our remarks on well-directed energies, to pass over one instance, on which, we trust there cannot be two opinions. If some of the novelties of the present period are its errors, others are its glory. It is cheering to the wearied pilgrim, in traversing the desert of this sinful world, to have the eye here and there refreshed with a verdant spot, yielding not only beauty, but fertility.

In alluding to certain recent undertakings which reflect honour on our country, it would be unjust to omit one which reflects honour on our sex. Justice, as well as gratitude, would be wounded, were no tribute to be paid to the most heroic of women.

The reader will have anticipated that we allude to the female Howard. Hers is almost (her sex considered) a higher strain of Christian heroism. Unprotected and alone, she dared to venture into scenes that would appal the stoutest

heart, and which the single principle alone by which she was actuated could have sustained hers. With true Christian courage, she ventured to explore the dreary abodes of calamity and crime, of execration and despair. She took 'the guage of misery,' not as a matter of curiosity, or philosophical speculation, but with the holy hope of relieving it. The favour of Him who stopped the mouths of the lions in the prophet's den, stopped those of these scarcely less savage beings. Her mild demeanour awed their rebellious spirits into peace.

Her visit was not the sudden ebullition of a charitable fit. It was the result of deliberate reflection, and doubtless of fervent prayer. She had long been projecting the means how to assist these most desperate and forlorn of human kind. She had conceived a hope, that what was flagitious might not be incorrigible; and adopted a well-digested plan for their religious instruction.

But she knew human nature too well, not to know that religious instruction would be very inefficacious, without correcting inveterately bad habits. Together with a few pious and able associates of her own sex,* she instituted a school of reform and industry, found manual employment for those who had never worked, and Christian instruction for those who had never been taught. The lips that had been seldom opened but to blaspheme their Maker, were taught to praise Him; the hands hitherto employed in theft were employed in honest labour. Infants, in a doubly lamentable sense, born in sin, and bred in vice, were snatched from a destruction which had appeared inevitable, and put into a train of improvement. The gloomy mansion which had lately been a scene of horror, only to be exceeded by those more dreadful future mansions to which it was conducting them changed its face. The loathsome prison which had witnessed nothing but intoxication and idleness; had heard no sounds but those of reviling and of imprecation, gradually became a scene of comparative decency, sobriety, and order.

If ever a charity of so extensive and public a nature could have been pleaded as some excuse for the remission of domestic duties, this might have been considered as the one exempt case, but it was not so. If she stole some hours from her family to visit the prison, she stole some hours from sleep to attend to her family.

Happily, goodness is contagious as well as sin. We may now say in a *good* sense, 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! Distant places have caught the flame. The bright example is already imitated by other ladies in some of our great towns, and will probably take a more ample range.

May we conclude this part of our subject by observing, that ladies of other religious professions would do well to copy, in certain respects, the example of the females of the society to which this distinguished lady belongs;—giving into no habits of dissipation, they have time; addicted to little expense in personal decoration, they have money; and the time and money thus snatched from vain and frivolous purposes, are more wisely directed together into the same right channel of Christian benevolence.

* Among these Mrs. Steinkopff stands in the first rank.

High Profession and Negligent Practice.

There has seldom been a period in which there was more talk of religion, than that in which we live; and we are disposed to believe, that the abundance of the heart in this instance produces its usual effect upon the lips. But it must also be observed, that, in an age of much vital religion, as it must be acknowledged this is, there will naturally be not a little false profession, or, at best, in many professors, more external show than inward piety—a religion that is sometimes more distinguished by peculiar phrases, and hot contention about opinions, than by much devotedness of heart and life.

One of the causes to which the growth of crime among our poor has been assigned, is the growth of our population; and some have undertaken to prove, that it is not because they are worse, but because they are more. This same way of judging may, perhaps be applied to the apparent growth of error in religion—that it is to be ascribed to its vast increase. As there is numerically a larger population in the religious ranks, may there not be naturally expected a larger proportion of error?

We now, therefore, venture a few remarks on another class of Christians, whose intentions, we hope, are not bad, though their charity is narrow, and their information small. We will distinguish them by the name of Phraseologists. These are persons who, professing to believe the whole of the Gospel, seem to regard only one half of it. They stand quite in opposition to the useful and laborious class whom we last considered. None will accuse these of that virtuous excess, of that unwearied endeavour to promote the good of others, on which we there animadverted. These are assiduous hearers, but indifferent doers; very valiant talkers for the truth, but remiss workers. They are more addicted to hear sermons than to profit by them.

Their religion consists more in a sort of spiritual gossiping, than in holiness of life. They diligently look out after the faults of others, but are rather lenient to their own.—They accuse of being legal, those who act more in the service of Christianity, and dispute less about certain opinions. They overlook essentials, and debate rather fiercely on, at best, doubtful points of doctrine; and form their judgment of the piety of others, rather from their warmth in controversy, than in their walking humbly with God.

They always exhibit in their conversation the idiom of a party, and are apt to suspect the sincerity of those whose higher breeding, and more correct habits, discover a better taste. Delicacy with them, is want of zeal; prudent reserve, want of earnestness; sentiments of piety, conveyed in others words than are found in their vocabulary, are suspected of error. They make no allowance for the difference of education, habits, and society: all must have one standard of language, and that standard is their own

Even if, on some points, you hold nearly the same sentiments, it will not save your credit; if you do not express them in the same language, you are in danger of having your principles suspected. By your proficiency or declension in this dialect, and not by the greater or less devotedness of your heart, the increasing or diminishing consistency in your practice, they take the guage of your religion, and determine the rise and fall of your spiritual thermometer. The language of these technical Christians indisposes persons of refinement, who have not had the advantage of seeing religion under a more engaging form, to serious piety, by leading them to make a most unjust association between religion and bad taste.

When they encounter a new acquaintance of their own school, these reciprocal signs of religious intelligence produce an instantaneous sisterhood; and they will run the chance of what the character of the stranger may prove to be, if she speaks in the vernacular tongue. With them, words are not only the signs of things, but things themselves.

If the phraseologists meet with a well-disposed young person, whose opportunities are slender, and to whom religion is new, they alarm her by the impetuosity of their questions. They do not examine if her principles are sound, but 'does she pray extempore?' This alarms her, if her too recent knowledge of her Bible and herself has not yet enabled her to make this desirable proficiency. 'Will she tell her experience?'—These interrogations are made without regard to that humility which may make her afraid to appear better than she is, and to that modesty which restrains a loud expression of her feelings. She does not, perhaps, even know the meaning of the term, in their acceptance of it.

Do we then ridicule experimental religion? Do we think lightly of that interior power of Divine grace upon the heart, which is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity? God forbid! But surely we may disapprove the treating it with flippancy and unhallowed familiarity; we may disapprove of their discussing it with as little reserve and seriousness, as if they were speaking of the state of the weather, or of the hour of the day; we may object to certain equivocal feelings being made the sole criterion of religion; feelings to which those who have them not may pretend; which those who have them may fear to communicate, before they have acquired a strength and permanency which may make them more decisive; we may blame such injudicious questions to incipient Christians, who barely know the first elements of Christianity.

By the apparent depth of their views, and this cant in the expression, the stranger is led to think there is something unintelligible in religion—some mysterious charm, which is too high for her apprehension. They will not hold out to her the consoling hope of progressive piety; for, with them growth in grace is no grace at all,—the starting-post and the goal are one and the same point. One of these consequences probably follows: she either falls into their peculiar views, or she is driven to seek wiser counsellors, or is led by the hopelessness of attaining to their supposed elevation, to give up the pursuit of religion altogether.

These technical religionists are so far from encouraging favourable tendencies, and 'the day of small things,' that they have no patience with persons professing hope, and despise every advance short of assurance.

To judge of them by their conversation, they seem to have as firm a certainty of their own security, as of the danger of all the rest of the world; that is, of all those who do not see with *their* eyes, hear with *their* ears, and discuss in *their* language. You would suppose salvation a very easy attainment, to see them got so much above hopes or fears.

Surely eternal happiness is not so cheap a thing, as that any should plead their claim to it on slight grounds. Some who talk confidently of this certainty, do not give strong indications in their life, of their having entered in at 'the strait gate' which leads to it. If it cost as few sacrifices, and required as little diligence, as some exhibit, there would not be so many who need doubt of their admission. Seek, strive, run, fight, labour, know thyself, humble thyself,—are imperatives not quite so easily or so generally obeyed, as to render 'the narrow way' a very crowded avenue. Self-knowledge, self-denial, self-abasement, are safer symptoms than undoubting confidence and exulting security.

The desire of hearing and speaking much on religious subjects, though Christian duties, are less unequivocal marks of improvement, than whether we love money less, and our neighbour more; whether there is any abatement in our pride, any victory over our passions; whether we are more disposed to conquer our own will, and to submit to that of God. A growth in candour, in charity, in kindness and forbearance, in meekness and self-distrust, will be the probable consequence of a close examination into our present deficiency in these amiable graces.

To these persons, the exclusive credit of their individual preacher is at least as valuable a consideration, as the glory of that God whom it may be *his* constant aim to glorify; and they do not think they exalt him sufficiently, if it be not done at the expense of others among his brethren, to whom he perhaps looks up with reverence. There is a wide difference between the kindness of praise and the grossness of adulation; between affection and worship; between gratitude and idolatry.

Since the human mind is so constituted as sometimes to require remission from its stricter engagements; since it feels the need of relaxing into some intervals of pleasure; it is no unimportant object to enquire what pleasures are dangerous, what are safe, and what may even be made instructive, even where improvement is not the professed object.

The persons in question have little turn for books; might it not usefully fill many a vacant gap were they to devote a little of their leisure to rational reading? There is much valuable literature which occupies an intermediate space between strictly religious and frothy books. History, well-chosen travels, select biographical works, furnish not only harmless but profitable

reading. The study of these would improve their views; and by expanding their minds, furnish them with topics of general conversation and useful reflection. It would enlarge their charity, by letting them see that many authors are not wicked, though they do not confine their works to religious discussion.

Whatever invigorates our capacity of receiving knowledge, whatever adds new and sound ideas to our stock, is not to be despised as useless, or rejected as sinful. Be it observed, however, that general literature must not be allowed to absorb our time, nor interfere with what is of indispensable obligation; yet, if it be clear from every thing light, sceptical, or unsound, it safely fills up the otherwise idle intervals of a religious life, which without it is liable to sink into meaner recreations, and inferior pursuits.

Objects of the first importance cannot be exclusively pursued even by higher capacities than those we are now considering. It is particularly necessary, therefore, for these last to supply their leisure with occupations which will furnish useful information, and matter of pleasing communication. For if the most elevated minds require the relief of change, much more does the ordinary and uncultivated intellect. It has but few images, which are soon exhausted, and must sink into weariness if it be not replenished by new ones.—Reading, such as we presume to recommend, might prevent the vacant mind from brooding over mysteries, which it has pleased the God of all wisdom, as well as all goodness, to hide from more enlightened minds than those we are contemplating. The want of something better to do, the want of resources of a higher order between the duties of the highest, reduces many persons to the most trifling ways of getting rid of time. They who allow of no intermediate reading between a sermon and a play, are often engaged in conversations, to which the most frivolous dialogues ever written would afford no adequate parallel: and they who would think it a sin to be studying the history of their country, are frequently, and perhaps eagerly, inquiring into the gossip of their own village, and contributing new anecdotes to its idle annals.

Many books are useful, that are not professedly religious, for we have minds as well as souls. We may be well instructed for the purpose of this world, without invading on the more important business of another.

If then they would adopt sober literature, in exchange for indolent trifling, their minds would improve in vigour, and their tempers in cheerfulness and candour. Every unoccupied mind lays itself open to the incursion of more dangerous enemies than those it intends to avoid; such a mind takes refuge in what is more injurious than the supposed evil, into which it congratulates itself that it has not fallen. A lively 'Spectator' of Mr. Addison, or a grave 'Guardian' of Bishop Berkeley, would be a pleasing resource. An 'Idler,' or a 'Rambler' of Dr. Johnson, might preserve them from realizing those characters in their own persons. Such writers would teach them the knowledge of mankind, and let them into many a snug secret which lies unmolested in their own heart. Such books might correct their taste, without deducting any thing from their stock of piety, except perhaps the phrases which disfigure it; would give them a relish for better society, and thus turn their waste moments to some profit. Be it observed, we speak of persons who have much leisure; those who have little, should give that little to the one Supreme object.

These religionists delight to speak of themselves as a persecuted people; so that a stranger not accustomed to their dialect, and having been in the habit of hearing the term applied to imprisonment, anathema, and proscription, is rejoiced when he afterwards finds it means no more than a little censure, and not a little ridicule; the latter perhaps more frequently drawn on them by their quaint phrases, injudicious language, and oddity of manner, than meant to express any contempt of religion itself.

We do not pretend to say, that there is not still to be encountered that lighter species of persecution which consists in reproach, supicion, and contempt; that there is not still an inferior kind of spiritual martyrdom, which those who would live godly in Christ Jesus must be content to suffer; a persecution which touches not the life but the fame: but this affects only Christians of a higher strain than those whom we are considering; persons who do not draw on themselves censure by their indiscretion, but by their sterniness in principle, and their superiority in practice. This reproach, however, they esteem a light evil, and are contented that as it was with the master, so it must be with the servant. It is well, however, if attack makes *even them* more discreet, and reproach more humble.

In short, the religion of the phraseologists is easy, their acquisitions cheap, their sacrifices few, their stock small, but always ready for production. This stock is rather drawn from the memory than the mind; it consists in terms rather than ideas; in opinions rather than in principles; and is brought out on all occasions, without regard to time, place, person, or circumstance.

It has been triumphantly asserted, but probably with more confidence than truth, that the children of pious persons are not, in general, piously educated. We have known too many instances to the contrary to admit the charge.

Though a good man's religion cannot be always transmitted with his estate, yet much has been done, and is actually doing, towards this transmission: and if it is sometimes found that the fact is as has been asserted, it is, we suspect, chiefly, though perhaps not exclusively, to be found in the class we have been considering. It is perhaps in consistency with some tenets they maintain, that they neglect to prepare the ground, to sow the seed, and labour to eradicate the weeds; believing that education is of little use; trusting that whatever is good must come from above, and come in God's own time.

We, too, know that whatever is good must come from above; and that of whatever is good, God is the giver: but we know, also, that the ripening suns, and the gracious showers, and the refreshing dews, which descend from heaven, are not intended to spare the labour of cultivation, but to invigorate the plant, to fill the ear

to ripen the grain, and thus, without superseding, to reward and bless the labours of the cultivator

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Auricular Confession.

THERE are certain topics which are almost too serious to be overlooked in an undertaking of this nature, and are yet almost too delicate to be touched upon.

Though we are far from thinking auricular confession the worst part of another church, yet we do not wish to see it introduced into our own, especially under the circumstances to which we are about to allude. There are certain young ladies of good talents, and considerable cultivation, who have introduced, what we might be almost tempted to call the coquetry of religion. —To the friendship of men of superior reputation for abilities and piety, frequently to young men; they insinuate themselves, by making a kind of false confidence. Under the humble guise of soliciting instruction, and obtaining comfort, they propose to them doubts which they do not entertain, disclose difficulties which do not really distress them, ask advice which they probably do not intend to follow, and avow sensibilities with which they are not at all troubled.

This, it is to be apprehended, is a kind of pious fraud, a little stratagem to be thought better than they are, by the lowly affectation of appearing to be worse. They ask for consolation which they do not need, for they are really not unhappy; but it is gratifying to engage attention, and to excite interest. These fanciful afflictions, these speculative discontents, after having, to the sympathising friend, appeared to be removed, are poured, with an air equally contrite, and a mind equally at ease, into the ear of the next pious, and polite listener; though the penitent had gone away from the first confessor more than absolved, the mourner more than comforted.

This confidential opening of the mind, this warm pouring forth of the soul, might be perfectly right and proper, were the communication confined to *one* spiritual director. For, here the axiom is reversed; here, in the multitude of counsellors, there is not safety but danger. If the perplexity be real, if the distress sincere, why not confide it to the bosom of some experienced female friend, or some able, and *aged* divine? There all would be right and safe; there confession would bring relief, if relief and not admiration be wanted; and where the feeling of contrition is genuine, admiration will not be sought.

If the young persons in view were not really estimable, we should not have taken the liberty to guard them against this temptation to vanity and egotism. To vanity, because they go away not only with comfort, but exultation. To egoism, because they go away with an increased tendency to make self their subject.

A celebrated court* maxim-monger, who was deeply read in human nature, though he did not derive his knowledge from the best sources, nor always turn it to the best account, has however given a sound caution, from which communicative young persons might glean a lesson. 'Never talk of *yourself*, neither of your good, nor your bad qualities.'

It is true the Christian will know the above admonition to be carried too far. He who considers that the soul is liable to diseases as well as the body, will allow the necessity for a spiritual as well as bodily physician. Now if a patient must, in order to obtain relief, tell his case to a practitioner for the body, is it to be forbidden that the languishing and dejected soul should lean for advice on a moral counsellor, 'An interpreter, one of a thousand?' But if the graces of the person or manner, or the hope of attracting undue attention, added nothing to the skill or worth of the adviser in one case, let us take care they do not influence our choice of the confident in the other.

The writer has been induced to hint at the abuse of this practice, from actual instances, in which unsound confidence, and a piety too artificial, by exciting kindness and awakening sympathy, have led to ill-assorted connexions, formed on a misconception of the real state of mind of the confessing party.

These remarks are by no means intended to apply to that Christian communion at once so profitable and so delightful. When the intention is simple, the heart sincere, the motive pure, and the parties suitable, such intercourse cannot but be warmly recommended. The advantage is reciprocal. The doubting and distressed spirit receives the counsel and the consolation it seeks; while the pious counsellor gains a deeper knowledge of the human mind in its varieties, by the communication of the wants, the difficulties, and the sense of sin in the contrite heart. In other religious intercourse, where there is a nearer approach of character, the heart is warmed by the expansion, and improved by the interchange of pious sentiments. The prophet even annexes to it a reward: 'They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.'

Unprofitable Reading.

WE have already ventured to allude to the disproportionate quantity of human life which is squandered in the ever multiplying haunts of public dissipation: but as this is an evil too notorious to require any fresh animadversion, we shall not stop to insist on the excess to which it is carried, but shall advert to another, which, if less ostensible, is scarcely less mischievous—we allude to the increased and increasing prevalence of idle reading.

For whether a large proportion of our probationary being—time that precious talent assigned us for providing for the treasures of eternity, be consumed in unprofitable reading at home, or in frivolous diversions abroad, the effect on the state of the mind is not very dissimilar

* Le Duc de la Rochefoucault.

The difference between private excess and public intoxication, is not very material as to its effects on the individual; the chief difference lies in the example and the expenses; for the mind is nearly as much unfitted for sober duties by the one, as by the other.

It is the same principle which influences the inveterate novel reader, and the never wearied pursuer of public dissipation: only its operation is different in different tempers. The active and lively trifler seeks to lose reflection in the bustling crowd; while the more indolent alienates her mind from what is right, without any exertion of the body. In one it is the imagination which is acted upon; in the other, the senses. In one sense, indeed, the domestic idleness is the worst; because it wraps itself up in its own comparative merit, and complacently reposes on its superior sobriety; for, if the spirits are more agitated in the one case, in the other they sink into a more perilous indolence. The scenes acted over by the imagination in private, have also a superiority in mischief over those of actual, busy gayety in others, as being more likely to be retained and repeated. Instances, however, are not rare, in which a thorough manager contrives to make both meet. In this union the injury is doubled.

But it will be urged by the too ready advocates, that *all* these books are not wicked. It is readily granted. Many works of fiction may be read with safety, some even with profit; but the constant familiarity even with such as are not exceptionable in themselves, relaxes the mind that wants hardening, dissolves the heart which wants fortifying, stirs the imagination which wants quieting, irritates the passions which want calming, and, above all, disinclines and disqualifies for active virtues, and for spiritual exercises. The habitual indulgence in such reading is a silent, mining mischief. Though there is no act, and no moment, in which any open assault on the mind, is made, as in the instances previously noticed, yet the constant habit performs the work of a mental atrophy; it produces all the symptoms of decay, and the danger is not less for being more gradual, and, therefore, less suspected.

The general manners are becoming more and more relaxed. Even the old restraints, which had a regard to appearances, were not without their use. The writer remembers to have heard Dr. Johnson reprove a young lady in severe terms, for quoting a sentiment from Tom Jones —a book, he said, which, if a modest lady had done so improper a thing as to read, she should not do so immodest a thing as to avow.

Many instances might be adduced to prove, that the age is gradually grown less scrupulous. We will give only one. Another young lady, independent and rich, about the same time was tempted to send for Rousseau's Heloise. A very little progress in the work convinced her, that it was neither safe for her to read, nor, having read it, could she either modestly confess it, or conscientiously deny the perusal, if questioned. Her virtue conquered her curiosity; she sent away, unread, a book which may now be seen lying open on the tables of many who would be shocked at the slightest imputation on the delicacy of their minds, or the scrupulousness of their morals.

But to limit the evil of idle reading to the single article of *time:* It is, perhaps, not too much to assert, that if the hours spent by the higher and middle classes in this profitless perusal could be counted, they would, probably, far exceed in number those spent by the gay in more ostensible and public dissipation. Nay we are almost tempted to say, that if, to the account of time dissipated by the latter, were added the hours spent by both classes in acts of devotion and serious reading, perhaps the total aggregate would be exceeded in number by the hours thrown away in the retirement of idle readers.

We are the more earnest on this subject, from being in possession of some facts which evince beyond any persuasions, which confirm beyond any arguments, the perils which we may be thought too warm in deprecating. Among the overflowing number of fictitious writings, not a few are there in the English, and still more and worse in the French and German schools, in which the intrigue between the already married hero and heroine is opened by means so apparently innocent, and conducted so gradually, and with so much plausibility, as, for a time, to escape detection. Vicious scenes are artfully kept out of sight, while virtuous principles are silently, but systematically undermined, till the imagination, that notorious corrupter of the heart, has had time to prepare the work of destruction. Such fascinating qualities are lavished on the seducer, and such attractive graces on the seduced, that the images indulged with delight by the fancy, carry on the reader imperceptibly to a point which is not so far from their indulgence in the act as some imagine. Such soothing apologies for an amiable weakness, that is, in plain English, for the breach of the seventh Commandment, are made by the writer, that the reader begins to think her judgment is convinced, as well as her inclination gratified; and the polluted mind, brought into the state, of all others, the least willing, and the least able, to resist practical crime, is ready to exclaim, with the satyrist of political vices,

> That *not* to be corrupt is the shame.

Thus the violation of as awful a prohibition as any in the decalogue, is softened down into a pardonable weakness. The stabbing the peace and honour of the husband, and the barbarous desertion of the innocent babes, or the still deeper wound given to the grown up daughters, is reduced to a venial fault, for which the irresistibleness of the temptation is shamelessly, but too successfully pleaded.

In tracing the effect, almost exclusively, of the unrestrained indulgence in these soothing pictures of varnished corruption, we could, were it prudent, produce actual instances of this breach of solemn vows, this total abandonment of all the proprieties, and all the duties of life; and it is too probable, that, besides the known instances to which allusion is here made, others might be adduced as having imbibed from the same sources the rudiments of moral misery, which has alarmingly swelled the recent list of

divorces, and thus render it more than probable, that the circulating library is no unfrequent road to Doctor's Commons.

There are distinctions and gradations maintained by the squanderers of time in their several ways, of which the well employed do not perceive the difference. Many who would turn with contempt from the card-table, think little of giving days and nights to these pernicious, or, at best, unimproving fictions—an exchange without being an improvement; for the volumes do not, like the cards, confine the mischief to the time they are in the hands, but, as we have observed, often leave impressions behind them when the others are forgotten.

How gladly should we limit these observations to persons whose time is turned to little account, and spent with little scruple, in *any* amusement which is not obviously corrupt! But it is with real reluctance we take the liberty to animadvert on the same error, though not carried to the same excess, in persons of a higher strain of character, persons of correct manners and considerable attainments. Do not many such tolerate in their families abundance of reading which, to say the least, is not improving, and of which, frequently, this would be too gentle a censure? Even where the books contain little that is coarse or corrupt, still it must be repeated, the prodigious quantity of life they consume must exceedingly deduct from that which would otherwise be allotted to more wholesome studies.

And this is not all.—We hear passages, not the most pure in point of delicacy, and quite unequivocal in point of impiety, repeated with enthusiasm by young ladies, from the works of a noble, but profligate and infidel poet: a poet rich in abused genius, and abounding in talents, ungratefully employed to dishonour Him who gave them.—But from the same fair lips, we hear little of Milton and of Spencer, of Cowper and of Young, of Thomson and of Goldsmith, of Gray and of Beattie, names once dear to every lover of enchanting song. Nor need we look back exclusively to departed genius, for the innocent and refreshing delights of poetry.—The muses have living votaries, who pour forth strains at once original, mellifluous, and chaste.

What shall we presume to say to sober-minded parents, even to grave clergymen, who not only do not prohibit the authors of the school in question; who not only do not restrain their daughters from being students in it, but who not unfrequently introduce, as part of the family reading, poetry, which if it contain not the gross expressions, and vulgar wickedness of the wits of Charles's days, is little less profane in principle, or corrupt in sentiment? There is some knowledge which it is a praise not to know; and the vice in this case being somewhat 'refined through certain strainers,' furnishes at once a temptation and an apology.

It may be urged, in vindication of this remissness, that as soon as young persons get out of their parents' hands, they will naturally choose their books for themselves. This is granted.—But is not every year which prolongs their precious innocence, a year gained? May not, within that period, the nascent libertinism be checked, the ardent imagination fixed to other pursuits, the sentiment of virtue kindled, the taste for purity confirmed, and the habit and love of prayer established? And, above all, is it not a pity that they should be able hereafter to plead as an apology for their intimacy with such books, that they were introduced to them by a fond and careful parent?

May we not take the liberty to ask of worthy, but, in this instance, injudicious parents, is this practice quite consistent with the command given to fathers, even under a darker dispensation that they should not limit the improvement of their children to any set hours, but that they should 'teach them diligently, sitting in the house, and walking by the way, rising up, and lying down?'

The Borderers.

Religion, and the world, used formerly to be considered as two different regions, situated separate and apart from each other.—They seldom maintained much unnecessary intercourse. One party shuddered at the strictness and severity of the other; which, in its turn, kept aloof from a communication which it feared might contaminate its own purity.

Between them lay a kind of neutral ground, which, though it divided them, was however, occasionally passed during any short interval of peace, for offices of necessity, of business, or of kindness; offices which, nevertheless, produced at no time entire reconciliation.

This neutral territory has been lately seized upon and occupied by a third party, a civil, obliging, and accommodating people, who are so perfectly well-bred, as to be desirous of keeping well with their neighbours on both sides the boundary. They are invited to intimacy by the gratifications held out by the one, and the reputation conferred by the other; present indulgence tempts on the left, future hope on the right. The present good, however, is generally too powerful a competitor for the future. They not only struggle to maintain their own interest in both countries, but are kindly desirous of accommodating all differences between the belligerent powers. Their situation, as borderers, gives them great local advantages on both sides. Though they keep on the same good terms with both, they have the useful and engaging talent, of seeming to belong exclusively to that party in which they happen to find themselves.

Their chief difficulty arises when they happen to meet the inhabitants of both territories together; yet so ingenious are they in the art of trimming, that they contrive not to lose much ground with either.

When alone with one party, they take care never to speak warmly of the absent. With the worldly they smile, and perhaps good-naturedly shake their head at some little scruples, and some excess of strictness in the absent party, though they do not go the length of actual censure.

When with the religious colony, they tenderly lament the necessity imposed on them of being

obliged to associate so much with neighbours from whom, they confess, there is not much to be learned, while they own there is something to be feared; but, as they *are quite sure* their inclination is not of the party, they trust there is no great danger.—They regret, that as they *must* live on terms with the world, they cannot, without a singularity to which ridicule would attach, avoid adopting some of their manners and customs. Thus they think it prudent to indulge in the same habits of luxury and expense; to conform to many of the same practices, doubtful at the best; and to attend on some places of diversion, for which, indeed, they profess to feel no great relish, and which, for the sake of propriety, are rather submitted to than enjoyed! 'One would not be particular, one does no good by singularity.'

By an invariable discretion, they thus gain the confidence and regard of both parties. The old settlers on the fashionable side are afraid of losing them, by opposition to their occasionally joining their enemies; while the religious colonies are desirous of retaining them, and rendering them service by courtesy and kindness, still charitably hoping their intentions are right, and their compliances reluctant. Thus their borders are every day extending, and their population increasing. As they can speak, as occasion requires, the language of both countries, they have the advantage of appearing to be always at home with each, who never suspect that the same facility in the dialect of the other, equally secures their popularity there.

In one respect, they carefully comply with the Apostle's injunction, applying to it, however, a meaning of their own, 'They let their moderation be known unto all men.'—They scrupulously avoid extremes. They keep a kind of debtor and creditor account with religion and the world, punctually paying themselves for some practice they renounce, by adopting some other which is a shade or two lighter: between these shades they discriminate nicely; and the pride they feel in what they have given up, is more sincere than the gratification at what they retain.

Thus, though hovering on the borders of both countries, they do not penetrate into the depths of either. The latitude they happen to be cast in varies according to circumstances. An awakening sermon will drive them, for a time, beyond the usual geographical degree; an amusing novel, or a new Canto of Childe Harold, will seduce them to retreat. Their intentions however, they flatter themselves, are generally on the right side, while their movements are too frequently on the other.

But though their language can accommodate itself to both parties, their personal appearance is entirely under the direction of one of them. In their external decorations, they are not behind the foremost of their fashionable friends; and truth obliges us reluctantly to confess, that their dress is as little confined within the bounds of strict delicacy, as that of women the rest of whose conduct is more exceptionable. The consequence is not unnatural: for to those who must *do* like other people, it is also necessary to *look* like other people. It does, however, seem a little incongruous to hear the language of one of the countries spoken, even with a strong accent, by ladies in the full costume of the other.

These borderers are frequently disposed to be benevolent, partly from a warm temperament, partly from a conviction that charity is a duty. They profess to give whatever they can spare, but of that proportion they allow vanity, and not piety, to be the arbiter. If personal ornament, if habits of luxury, did not swallow up their money, charity would have it. Charity is the next best thing to self-gratification.

Should they continue their present course, and their numbers increase, or, as is commonly the case, should continual motion accelerate progress, the land-marks of separation between the several countries will insensibly be lost, and it will be difficult to divine the exact limitations of the invading neighbours.

It has frequently been regretted that an amicable accommodation between the adverse parties could not be accomplished by the interference of this intermediate region. But whenever it has been attempted, it has not always been successful. The coalition, it has been found, could not readily be brought about. Prejudices on the one part, and rigorous demands on the other, have hitherto perpetuated the separation.

Terms of peace, indeed, cannot easily be made where one side expects so many sacrifices, and where the other has so much that must be parted with. The worldly territory having, beyond all comparison, the larger population, is of course the stronger, and therefore most likely to hold out.

But though no actual flag of truce has yet been sent out for a general peace, yet alliances are frequently contracted between individuals of the hostile countries, but on very unequal terms; for it unfortunately happens that the party from the more correct side, 'who come out to visit the daughters of the land,' have been seduced by the cheerful music, splendid banners, and gay attractions of the other; and have been prevailed upon to settle in the enemy's camp. To them it more frequently happens that they gradually forget all they learnt in their father's house, and insensibly adopt the manners of the strange country, than that they bring over the other party to their side. It may, therefore, perhaps be safer not to contract these *unholy alliances* till there is a conquest obtained by the small territory over the great one; an event which, if we may judge by the present state of the parties, seems at a very considerable distance.

But enough, and perhaps the scrupulous Christian will say too much, of this light manner of treating a serious subject. We acknowledge the charge; we bow to the correction: confessing that we scarcely knew how to approach this important and interesting class of persons, without the thin veil of something between fiction and fact, between allegory and true history. We felt an almost sinful reluctance to say any thing which might seem revolting to those pleasing characters who have shown some disposition to religion, who love its disciples, without having courage to imitate

them.—But real concern for their best interests will not allow those who assume to advocate the cause of Christianity, to conceal the distance at which they at present appear to stand from its constraining power, and from its practical consequences.

Perhaps your creed is not very erroneous. Probably the rectitude of your religious friends, whose doctrines are sound, and the indifference of your fashionable friends, who 'care for none of these things,' have preserved you pretty clear from errors of opinion. Whilst the occasional society of the pious has kept your sentiments in order, the amusements of the worldly have indemnified you for the severities of the other quarter. But opinions do little till they are ripened into principles. It is reputable to say with one party, 'strait is the gait and narrow is the way;' but the company of the other lets you see that it is not so easy to enter in at that gate, and to walk in that way, as you had flattered yourself you should have found it.

To you the *world* is by far the most formidable foe of the triple alliance, of the three confederated enemies, which the Scripture tells us war against the soul. We have presumed that opinions may not be very erroneous, but there are moral as well as speculative heresies, of which worldliness is the originating principle, and in which it is the practical operator. The WORLD is the grand heresiarch. There are many more who 'love the world, and the things of the world,' than who care whether doctrines are true or false. While they themselves are let alone to follow their own devices; while they are left undisturbed to their own pursuits; you may propound, or controvert, or adopt any opinion, sound or heretical, with equally little danger, or equally little benefit to them.

To the devotee of pleasure there is something harsh and repulsive in doctrines and dogmas; to take part with them would be going out of the way: while to those who can contrive to make right opinions live on friendly terms with wrong practices, it would be a gratuitous folly to add to the faults of conduct the errors of speculation.

In this affectionate remonstrance, we allude not to what might be called palpable and tangible offences; these the decorums of their condition set them above any temptation to commit. We speak not of any disbelief or contempt of religion; these are not the immediate perils of their position: it is not infidelity but indifference—a disinclination to Christianity, not as opposed to unbelief, but as it contradicts the maxims, the manners, the habits of their associates.—Their danger consists in a supreme attachment to present objects, and a neglect of such as are future; it consists in preferring the pleasures and the interests of the world to the service of Him who made it. They are governed by other principles than those of that gospel which has proclaimed that 'the friendship of the world is enmity against God.' They are influenced by its opinions, misled by its example, enslaved by its amusements; they fear lest any deviation from its prescribed code should bring their good sense and good taste in question; lest withdrawing from its practices should bring on them the imputation of narrowness or enthusiasm. 'In short, they go with 'the multitude that keep holiday,' not, indeed, in the Scriptural sense, but in direct conformity to the vulgar acceptation of that term.

Worldly allurements find in the unrenewed heart a willingness to meet them, a disposition accommodated to them by temperament, a readiness to pursue them, increased by habit. The natural heart is already on the world's side, Before the world has time to begin its attack. the citadel is disposed to yield. Before the assault is made, there is a mutual good understanding, a silent connivance between the besiegers and the besieged. As soon as the trenches are opened, the disposition to parley and to submit is nearly the same act.

You appeared, however, to take the first step in what is right, by occasionally joining religious society, and by the pleasure you expressed in it. By that introduction you seemed not undesirous of ranging yourself partly on that side. Having broken through that first obstruction, it was hoped that every subsequent step would have become less irksome.

That religion has its difficulties, we do not pretend to deny; but with a hearty concurrence of the will, nurtured by cordial prayer, strengthened by a full reliance on the Saviour, and sustained by the aid of His Spirit, which is offered you, the difficulties will daily diminish. Rest not, then, in that low state of religion which is satisfied with the hope of escaping punishment; calculate not how small a measure may suffice to effect that escape. Search not out for an imaginary intermediate state between the children of wrath and the children of God. Rest not till you have attained that entire consecration of heart, whose object, aim, and end, is eternal life. Forget not that they who run in a race, though they may come closer to the goal, yet, if they come short of it, fail of the prize as completely as those competitors whose distance is greater: and, if we come short of heaven, whether we lose it by more or fewer steps, the failure is equally decisive, the loss equally irreparable.

Those worldly persons with whom you associate are intrenched on every side by numbers; they therefore act as if they thought that the evil, supposing it to be evil, which is shared among so many, cannot be injurious to the individual; forgetting that every man must bear his own burden, and suffer for his own sin; for, though multitudes may give countenance to your errors here, they will not answer for you hereafter.

Do not follow those who have no settled course of their own—who are hurried to and fro by every breath of custom—whom fashion leadeth withersoever it listeth. The persons against whom we would guard you, though confident, are not without their fears; but it is worth observing, that their fears seldom lie on the same side with their dangers. They fear not great practical errors; these they soften down and treat with complacency; these are tenderly mentioned as the infirmities of nature—weaknesses to which we are all liable. Almost every excess in personal gratification is thus kindly palliated: 'Why did God give us both the dis.

position and the means to indulge it, if indulgence were a sin?' There is but one excess they guard against—an excess, indeed, of which they are in little danger,—we mean a high degree of religion; for surely excess is little to be feared, where the thing has not yet even been entered upon!

Be assured, that whatever serves to keep the heart from God, is one and the same spirit of irreligion, whether it appear in the shape of coarse vice, or whether it is softened by the smoothness of decorum, and the blandishments of polished life. We are far from comparing them together, as if they were equally injurious to society, or equally offensive to decency; but we *must* compare them together as equally drawing away the heart from the worship and the love of God. Courteousness, which is unaccompanied by principle, will stand the most courteous in no stead, with Him who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Some of these well-bred persons, who exercise this large and liberal candour towards practical offences, and treat with tenderness certain vices, not thought disreputable by the world, and who even put a favourable construction on things very unjustifiable in the sight of God, lose all their kindness, put no favourable interpretation, when sound religion is in question. They are, indeed, too discreet to reprobate it under its own proper name, but the ready appellation of enthusiasm presents itself—is always at hand to vindicate the hastiest judgment, and the most contemptuous construction.

But though we think far better things of you, whom we are addressing, yet may you not, in this society, be tempted to disavow, or, at least, to conceal, even the measure of piety you actually have, for fear of exciting that dreaded suspicion, of 'being righteous over much?' May not this fear, strengthened by this society, keep you back till your pious tendencies, by being suppressed, may gradually come to be extinguished?

We are ready to acknowledge, and to love, all that is amiable in you: but we must not forget, that the fairest and most brilliant creature, the most engaging manners, and the most accomplished mind, stands in the same need of repentance, forsaking of sin, redemption by the Son of God, and renovation by His Spirit, as the least attractive. The more engaging the manners, and the more interesting the acquirements, the more is it to be lamented, that those very attractions, by your complacency in them, may have stood between you and heaven,—may, by your resting in them, have been the cause of your not pressing towards the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Bear then in mind, that you may be pleasing to others, while you have an unsanctified heart; that politeness, though it may put on the appearance of humility, is but a poor imitation of that prime grace; that good breeding, though the beautiful decoration of a pious mind, is but a wretched substitute for the want of it.

Be assured, however, at the same time, that true religion will in no wise diminish your natural or acquired graces; so far from it, those graces will be more estimable; they will be even more admired, when they are known not to be the best things you have. When you set less value on them yourself, they will be more pleasing to others; who, though they will not estimate them above their worth, will not depreciate them below it.

We are persuaded that you are too reasonable to expect that Christianity will change its character, or lower its requirements, or make the strait gate wider, or the narrow way broader, or hold out false colours, in order to induce you to embrace it. It is not that easy and superficial thing which some suppose, as requiring little more than a ceremonious attendance on its forms, and a freedom from the gross violation of its commands. This may be nominal, but it is not saving Christianity. It is not that spiritual, yet practical religion, for which the Son of God endured the cross, that He might establish it in the hearts of His followers,—which He is pleading with His Heavenly Father, to establish in your heart. He did not suffer that His children might be excused from self-denial; nor that, because He was holy, they might be negligent. He suffered, that 'the women that are at ease might rise up; that the careless daughters might hear His voice, and give ear unto His word.'

If you are disposed to think that what you must give up is great, compare it with what you will gain, and you will be ashamed of your miscalculation; you will think the sacrifice as small as the objects sacrificed were worthless; for Christianity, though a self-denying principle, yet denies you nothing which, even now, adds to your real happiness. It only disenchants you from an illusion, and gives you substantial peace in exchange. It will rob you of nothing which good sense and sound reason do not condemn, as well as the New Testament.

Perhaps you have just religion enough to render you occasionally uneasy. The struggle between the claims of the world and your casual convictions, is far from being a happy state. The flattery which delights, misleads; the diversions which amuse, will not console: the prospect which promises, disappoints. Continue not, then, 'working in the fire for very vanity.' Labour not to reconcile two interests, which, spite of your endeavours, will ever remain irreconcilable.

A life governed by Christianity differs in every thing from the worldly system. It is free from the turbulence and the agitation of its pursuits: it has none of the anxieties and jealousies of its competitions; consequently none of the lassitude and the vexation of its disappointing results. The further you proceed in its paths of pleasantness, the pleasanter they become. Its difficulties diminish, its delights increase. It has pleasures of its own, higher and better; satisfactions which depend not on human admiration, but on His favour, whom to know is eternal life.

Continue not, then, to live as if the great end for which you were sent into the world, was already accomplished. Continue not to act as if you thought you had done all for which God gave you an intelligent mind, reasoning faculties, aspiring thoughts, capacities for endless

happiness. Let not those powers which were meant to fit you not only for the society of angels, but for the vision of God, be any longer wasted on objects the most frivolous; on things which, at best, must end when this world ends. Oh! renounce pursuits, some of them below a rational, unsuited to an accountable, and altogether unworthy of a never-ending being! Renounce them for objects more becoming a candidate for an inheritance among the saints in light, better adapted to an immaterial, immortal spirit, and commensurate with eternity.

REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER,

AND ON THE ERRORS WHICH MAY PREVENT ITS EFFICACY.

On the Corruption of Human Nature.

The most original French writer of our own time, but who employed his powerful talents to the most pernicious purposes, abruptly begins his once popular work on education with this undeniable truth,—'All is good as it comes out of the hands of God, all is corrupted in the hands of man.'

In his first position, this sceptic bears a just testimony to the goodness of his Creator; but the second clause, his subsequent application of it, though also a truth, is not the whole truth. He ascribes all the evils of man to the errors of his education.

Now, though it cannot be denied that many of his faults are owing to a defect in education, yet his prime evil lies deeper, is radical, and must be traced to a more remote and definite cause.

Had the writer been as enlightened as he was ingenious, he would have seen that the principle of evil was antecedent to his education; that it is to be found in the inborn corruption of the human heart. If then, from an infidel, we are willing to borrow an avowal of the goodness of God in the creation of man, we must look to higher authorities to account for his degeneracy, even to the sacred oracles of God himself.

The subject of man's apostacy is so nearly connected with the subject of Prayer, being indeed that which constitutes the necessity of this duty, that some mention of the one ought to precede any discussion of the other. Let, then, the conviction, that we are fallen from our original state, and that this lapse furnishes the most powerful incentive to prayer, furnish an apology for making a few preliminary remarks on this doctrine.

The doctrine is not the less a fundamental doctrine, because it has been abused to the worst purposes: some having considered it as leaving us without hope, and others, as lending an excuse to unresisted sin. It is a doctrine which meets us in one unbroken series throughout the whole sacred volume; we find it from the third of Genesis, which records the event of man's apostacy, carried on through the history of its fatal consequences in all the subsequent instances of sin, individual and national, and running in one continued stream from the first sad tale of woe, to the close of the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic Vision.

And, to remove the groundless hope, that this quality of inherent corruption belonged only to the profligate and abandoned, the Divine Inspirer of the sacred writers took especial care, that they should not confine themselves to relate the sins of these alone.

Why are the errors, the weaknesses, and even the crimes of the best men recorded with equal fidelity? Why are we told of the twice repeated deceit of the father of the faithful? Why of the single instance of vanity in Hezekiah? Why of the too impetuous zeal of Elijah? Why of the error of the almost perfect Moses? Why of the insincerity of Jacob? Why of the far darker crimes of the otherwise holy David? Why of the departure of the wisest of men from that piety, displayed with sublimity unparalleled in the dedication of the Temple? Why seems it to have been invariably studied to record with more minute detail the vices and errors of these eminent men, than even those of the successive impious kings of Israel and of Judah; while these last are generally dismissed with the brief, but melancholy sentence, that they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; followed only by too frequent an intimation, that they made way for a successor worse than themselves? The answer is, that the truth of our universal lapse could only be proved by transmitting the record of those vices, from which even the holiest men were not exempt.

And as these affecting details unanswerably establish the truth of the doctrine, so they are not recorded for barren doctrinal information. They are recorded to furnish Christians of every age with a salutary caution, with awful warning.

Surely the best man among us will hardly venture to say, that he is more holy than Abraham, Moses, David, or Peter. If, then, these saints exhibited such evidences of not having escaped the universal infection, will not every reflecting child of mortality yield to the conviction, that this doctrine is as true as the history which has recorded it? Will he not proceed further to say, 'How then shall I be high-minded! How shall I not fear? How shall I deny the cause of the evil tendencies of my own heart, the sins of my own life, the thoughts of foolishness, and the actings of iniquity within myself?' And will not such serious enquiry, by God's grace, acting on the study of the characters of these highly eminent, but not perfect worthies of old times, patriarchs, prophets, and saints, lead the enquirer, through the redemption, wrought for all, and faith in the operation of the blessed Spirit, to that effectual repentance and fervent

prayer, to which, in this same Divine history, such gracious promises are made?

Had the Holy Scriptures kept back from man the faithful delineations of the illustrious characters to which we have referred, the truth of the doctrine in question, though occasionally felt, and in spite of his resistance forced upon him, would not have been believed; or, if believed, would not have been acknowledged.

It is, then, one great end of the oracles of Divine truth, to humble man, under a sense of his inherent and actual corruptions. The natural man feels it repugnant to his pride to suppose this doctrine is addressed to him.

It is very true that this all-important doctrine of human corruption, is, like many other truths, both in the natural, moral, and spiritual world, liable to certain speculative objections, and metaphysical difficulties.—Laying hold on these, which, often, a child might discover, and no philosopher be able to answer, even upon merely philosophical subjects, we excuse ourselves altogether from studying the Divine book, and fearful, in secret, of the discoveries we should make, pretend that its Author has left truth so obscure, as to be impervious to human eyes; or so lofty, as to be above human reach.

But is it not making God unjust, and even the author of that sin which he charges on ourselves, to suppose that he had put truth and knowledge out of our reach, and then threatened to punish us for failing in that which he himself had made impossible? Is it probable that He, whose eyes you say are so pure, that he cannot look upon iniquity, should tolerate it, by tying our hands, and blinding our eyes, and thus abandon us to the unrestrained dominion of that which he hates?

The only real question which concerns us in our present imperfect and probationary state, is this:—Are the statements of revelation sufficient to establish this or that doctrine? And is the doctrine so established, a sufficient ground for the duties required? If this be answered in the affirmative, then to ask for fewer difficulties, clearer light, or stronger motives to action, is only to enter a vain contest with Almighty wisdom, and Divine supremacy. Our present disobedience proves that more light would only increase our guilt, stronger motives would only render us more inexcusable. We should reject then what we neglect now.—To refuse what we now have, is not for want of light, but of eyes; not for want of motives, but of faith; not for want of rules, but of obedience; not for want of knowledge, but of will. Let us then pity those blind eyes which do not see, and especially those wilful eyes which will not see.

The Christian revelation, as far as respects its professed practical purpose, is brought within the reach of the plainest understanding. We speak of the Gospel itself, and not of those metaphysical perplexities with which the schools have endeavoured to meet metaphysical objections; we speak of the fundamental truths on which God has made salvation to depend. The unlettered Christian lays hold on those truths which the philosopher misses. The former looks to the Holy Spirit for his teacher, the latter to his own understanding. The one lives holily, and thus 'by doing the will of God, he comes to know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'

Christianity hangs on a few plain truths; 'that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all that seek him;' that man has apostatised from his original character, and by it has forfeited his original destination; that Christ came into this world and died upon the cross to expiate sin, and to save sinners; that after his ascension into Heaven, he did not leave his work imperfect. He sent his Holy Spirit, who performed his first office by giving to the Apostles miraculous powers. His offices did not cease there; he has indeed withdrawn his miraculous gifts, but he still continues his silent but powerful operations, and that in their due order,—first, that of convincing of sin, and of changing the heart of the sinner, before he assumes the gracious character of the Comforter. What need, then, of heresies to perplex doctrines, or of philosophy to entangle, or of will-worshippers to multiply them?

We do not deny that there are, in Christianity, high and holy mysteries; but these 'secret things,' though they 'belong to God,' have their practical uses for us; they teach us humility, the prime Christian grace; and they exercise faith, the parent attribute of all other graces.

This religion of facts, then, the poorest listeners in the aisles of our churches understand sufficiently, to be made by it wise unto salvation. They are saved by a practical belief of a few simple, but inestimable truths.

By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers, were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved; not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not 'a philosophy, falsely so called;' nor their science, 'a science of opposition;' but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus. Had there been any other way but the cross by which sinners could be saved, they perhaps, of all men were best qualified to have found it.

The wise and the weak, the illiterate and the learned, cannot, indeed, equally discuss or expound these doctrines, but they are equally saved by them. In view of the simple means of salvation, talents lose their superiority, learning its dignity, and power its pre-eminence. While the sober Christian keeps on his safe, because prescribed course; the wise, and the disputer of this world, by deserting it fall into absurdities which plain men escape; they make the difficulties they do not find, and wander in the endless mazes of presumptuous deviation.

To return, then, to the particular doctrines under consideration:—Let us believe man is corrupt, because the Bible tells us he is so. Let us believe that such were so by nature, even the best, since we learn it from the Divine source. Let us from the same authority, trace the disorder to its source from a fallen parent, its seat in a corrupted heart, its extent through the whole man, its universality over the whole race.

All are willing to allow that we are subject to frailties, to imperfections, to infirmities; facts compel us to confess a propensity to crimes, but worldly men confine the commission of them to the vulgar. But to rest here would lead us to a very false estimate of the doctrine in question, contrary to the decisive language of Scripture; it would establish corruption to be an accident, and not a root. It would, by a division of offenders into two classes, deny that all offences are derived from one common principle.

Among the higher ranks there is little temptation to the commission of certain sins; murder is rare, fraud uncommon, robbery not found, yet the inborn principle is the same in all. Circumstances, rank, education, example, reputation, give advantages to one class, which, had they changed places, might have led to the vices so common in the other; while, had the notorious offenders against the laws and the Divine law-giver, changed situations with their superiors, we should then have heard only of *their* imperfections, *their* infirmities, their *frailties*.

Temptation does not make the sin, it lies ready in the heart. Accident does not create the propensity, it only brings it into action. It destroys the plea of exemption from natural corruption, but it does not put that corruption *into* the heart. It was there before, ready, without the grace of God, ready, without the restraint of religion, ready, without the bridle of an enlightened conscience, to break out into any excess. Yet there are many flagrant offences against God and against human laws, which the high-born, and the high-bred frequently commit with as little scruple as the lowest. The frequency of duelling, the breach of the seventh commandment, two offences frequently found in the same company, gaming, the violation of the Sabbath, with other enormities, would alone sufficiently prove the principle to exist, independently of rank, education, or fortune. Are not what, by way of distinction, we may call the metaphysical or spiritual sins, which are cherished without loss of character—is not ambition, which knows no bounds—envy, which knows no rest—avarice which destroys all feeling—jealousy, which is its own tormentor—ill-temper, which is the tormentor of others—ungoverned anger, which is murder in its first seeds; are not all these equally to be found in the high-born and the low-bred? Again, is not sensuality in the great, which, in the case of the poor, might have produced unfair means to indulge it—is not the love of splendour and ostentation, which are thought to add dignity to the rich, the very principle which leads the necessitous to forgery, the crime for which so many are now suffering capital punishment?

If then men would examine their own bosoms as closely, as they censure the faults of others loudly, we should all find there the incipient stirrings of many a sin, which, when brought into action, by the temptations of poverty, of ignorance, of unresisted passion, produce consequences the most appalling. Let us then bless God, not that we are better than other men, but that we are placed by Providence out of the reach of being goaded by that temptation, stimulated by that poverty, which, had they been our lot, might have led to the same termination.

Let then the fear of God, the knowledge of his word, and the knowledge of ourselves, teach us that there is not, by nature, so wide a difference between ourselves and the men we abhor as we fondly fancy; that there is not, by nature, a great gulf fixed, that they who are on this side might not have passed over to the other. Let us not look to any superior virtue, to any native strength of our own, but let us look with a lively gratitude to that mercy of God which has preserved us from such temptations; to his unmerited goodness, which has placed us in circumstances that have put us above necessity —'the devil's plea.' But, above all, let us look to that preventing and restraining grace which is withheld from none who ask it, and we shall not be so very forward to say, contemptuously, to the worst of our fellow-creatures, 'stand by, I am holier than thou.' A thorough belief in this doctrine would lead us to pray more fervently to be delivered in 'all time of our wealth, as in all time of our tribulation.'

It is not enough that God has *revealed* the way of salvation, he must also incline us to *accept* it. It is this gift, and this acceptance, which makes the distinction between the best men and the worst. Without this all-powerful grace, Latimer might have led Bonner to the stake; with it, Bonner might have ascended the scaffold a martyr to true religion. Without this grace, Luther might have fattened on the sale of indulgences; and with it, Leo the Tenth might have accomplished the blessed work of the reformation.

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False Notions of the Dignity of Man, shown from his Helplessness and Dependance.

Man is not only a sinful, he is also a helpless, and therefore a dependant being. This offers new and powerful motives for the necessity of prayer, the necessity of looking continually to a higher power, to a better strength than our own. If that Power sustain us not, we fall; if He direct us not, we wander. His guidance is not only perfect freedom, but perfect safety. Our greatest danger begins from the moment we imagine we are able to go alone.

The self-sufficiency of a man, arising from his imaginary dignity, is a favourite doctrine with the nominal Christian. He feeds his pride with this pernicious aliment. The contrary opinion is so closely connected, indeed is so intimately blended, with the subject of the preceding chapter, that we shall have the less occasion to extend our present observations to any length.

We hear much, and we hear falsely, of the dignity of human nature. Prayer, founded on the true principles of Scripture, alone teaches us wherein our true dignity consists. The dignity of a fallen creature is a perfect anomaly. True dignity, contrary to the common opinion, that it is an inherent excellence, is actually a sense of the want of it; it consists not in our valuing ourselves, but in a continual feeling of

our dependence upon God, and an unceasing aim at conformity to his image.

Nothing but a humbling sense of the sinfulness of our nature, of our practised offences, of our utter helplessness, and constant dependence, can bring us to fervent and persevering prayer. How did the faith of the saints of old flourish under a darker dispensation, through all the clouds and ignorance which obscured their views of God. 'They looked unto Him and were enlightened! How do their slender means and high attainments reproach us!

David found that the strength and spirit of nature which had enabled him to resist the lion and the bear, did not enable him to resist his outward temptations, nor to conquer his inward corruptions. He therefore prayed, not only for deliverance 'from blood guiltiness,' for a grievously remembered sin, he prayed for the *principle* of piety, for the *fountain* of holiness, for 'the creation of a clean heart,' for 'the renewing of a right spirit,' for 'truth in the inward parts,' that the 'comfort of God's help might be granted him.' This uniform avowal of the secret workings of sin, this uniform dependence on the mercy of God to pardon, and the grace of God to assist, render his precatory addresses, though they are those of a sovereign and a warrior, so universally applied to the case of every private Christian.

One of our best poets—himself an unsuccessful courtier—from a personal experience of the mortifying feelings of abject solicitation, has said, that if there were the man in the world whom he was at liberty to hate, he would wish him no greater punishment than attendance and dependence. But he applies the heavy penalty of this wish to the dependants on mortal greatness.

Now, attendance and dependence are the very essence both of the safety and happiness of a Christian. Dependence on God is his only true liberty, as attendance on Him is his only true consolation. The suitor for human favour is liable to continual disappointment; if he knock at the door of his patron, there is probably a general order not to admit him. In the higher case, there is a special promise, that 'to him that knocks it shall be opened.' The human patron hates importunity; the Heavenly Patron invites it. The one receives his suitor according to his humour, or refuses his admission from the caprice of the moment; with the other, 'there is no variableness nor shadow of turning:' 'Come unto me,' is his uniform language.

The man in power has many claims on his favour, and comparatively few boons to bestow. The God of Power has all things in His gift, and only blames the solicitor for coming so seldom, or coming so late, or staying so little a while. He only wishes that his best gifts were more earnestly sought.

When we solicit an earthly benefactor, it is often upon the strength of some pretence to his favour—the hope of some reward for past services: even if we can produce little claim, we insinuate something like merit. But when we approach our heavenly Benefactor, so far from having any thing like claim, any thing like merit to produce, our only true, and our only acceptable plea, is our utter want of both claim and merit—is the utter destitution of all that can recommend us; yet we presume to ask favour, when we deserve nothing but rejection; we are encouraged to ask for eternal happiness when we deserve only eternal punishment. Though we have nothing to produce but disloyalty, we ask for the privilege of subjects; though nothing but disobedience to offer, we plead the privileges of children—we implore the tenderness of a father.

In dependence on God there is nothing abject; in attendance on Him, nothing servile. He never, like the great ones of the world, receives the suitor with a petrifying frown, or what is worse, never dismisses him with a cruel smile and a false promise.

Even if the petitioner to human power escape the vexation of being absolutely rejected; even if his suit be granted, the grant it may be, is accompanied with a mortifying coldness, with an intelligible hint that the donor expects to be no further troubled. The grant may be attended with such a tedious delay as may make it no benefit. The boon granted does not, perhaps, prove so valuable as the applicant expected; or he finds he might have spent the long season of his attendance, his watching, and his waiting to better purpose; or he might have employed his interest in another quarter, in obtaining something more important; or, after all, he may have received it too late in life to turn it to the profitable account he had expected.

But the Almighty Donor never puts off His humble petitioner to a more convenient season. His Court of Requests is always open. He receives the petition as soon as it is offered; He grants it as soon as it is made; and, though he will not dispense with a continuance of the application, yet to every fresh application He promises fresh support. He will still be solicited, but it is in order that He may still bestow. Repeated gifts do not exhaust His bounty, nor lessen His power of fulfilment. Repeated solicitation, so far from wearying His patience, is an additional call for His favour.

Nor is the lateness of the petition any bar to its acceptance: He likes it should be early, but He rejects it not though it be late.

With a human benefactor the consciousness of having received former favours, is a motive with a modest petitioner for preventing his making an application for more; while, on the contrary, God even invites us to call on Him for future mercies, by the powerful plea of His past acts of goodness—'even mercies which have been ever of old.' And as past mercies on God's part, so, to the praise of His grace be it said, that past offences on our own part are no hindrance to the application of hearty repentance or the answer of fervent prayer.

The petitioner to human power, who may formerly have offended his benefactor, contrives to soften his displeasure, by representing that the offence was a small one. The devout petitioner to God uses no subterfuge. In the boldness of faith, and the humility of repentance, he cries 'Pardon my iniquity, for it is *great*.'

It is no pardon, then, to assert that dependence on God is the only true safety depend-

ence upon Him, the only true freedom—freedom from doubt and fear, and sin; freedom from human dependence; above all, freedom from dependence on ourselves. As pardoned sinners, through the redemption wrought for them, find, in the renewed nature, a restoration to that dignity they had forfeited, so those who are most destitute of the dignity which arises from this dependence, missing the reality, deceive themselves with the shadow.

He who does not believe this fundamental truth, on which the other doctrines of the Bible are built,—even he who does nominally profess to assent to it as a doctrine of Scripture; yet, if he does not experimentally acknowledge it; if he does not feel it in the convictions of his own awakened conscience, in his discovery of the evil workings of his own heart, and the wrong propensities of his own nature, all bearing their testimony to its truth—such a one will not pray earnestly for its cure—will not pray with that feeling of his own helplessness, with that sense of dependence on Divine assistance, which alone makes prayer efficacious.

Of this corruption he can never attain an adequate conception, till his progress in religion has opened his eyes on what is the natural state of man. Till this was the case, he himself was as far from desiring the change, as he was from believing it necessary. He does not even suspect its existence, till he is in some measure delivered from its dominion.

Nothing will make us truly humble, nothing will make us constantly vigilant, nothing will entirely lead us to have recourse to prayer so fervently or so frequently, as this ever abiding sense of our corrupt nature,—as our not being able to ascribe any disposition in ourselves, to any thing that is good, or any power to avoid, by our own strength, any thing that is evil.

The obligation of Prayer universal—Regular seasons to be observed.—The sceptic and the sensualist reject prayer.

Among the many articles of erroneous calculation, to which so much of the sin and misery of life may be attributed, the neglect or misuse of prayer will not form the lightest. The prophet Jeremiah, in his impassioned address to the Almighty makes no distinction between those who acknowledge no God, and those who live without prayer. 'Pour our thy fury, O Lord, upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.'

Some duties are more incumbent on some persons, and some on others; depending on the difference of talents, wealth, leisure, learning, station, and opportunities; but the duty of prayer is of imperative obligation; it is universal, because it demands none of any of the above requisites; it demands only a willing heart, a consciousness of sin, a sense of dependence, a feeling of helplessness. Those who voluntarily neglect it, shut themselves out from the presence of their Maker. 'I know you not,' must assuredly be the sentence of exclusion on those who thus 'know not God.' Nothing, it is true, can exclude them from His inspection, but they exclude themselves from his favour.

Many nearly renounce prayer, by affecting to make it so indefinite a thing, as not to require regular exercise. Just as many, also, unhallow the Sabbath, who pretend they do nothing on week-days, which they should fear to do on Sundays. The truth is, instead of sanctifying the week-days by raising them to the duties of Sunday—which is, indeed, impracticable, let men talk as they please,—they desecrate the Sunday to secular purposes, and so contrive to keep no Sunday at all.

Stated seasons for indispensable employments, are absolutely necessary for so desultory, so versatile a creature as man. That which is turned over to any chance time is seldom done at all; and those who despise the recurrence of appointed times and seasons, are only less censurable than those who rest in them.

Other duties and engagements have their allotted seasons; why, then, should the most important duty in which an immortal being can be employed, by being left to accident, become liable to occasional omision, liable to increasing neglect, liable to total oblivion?

All the other various works of God know their appointed times;—the seasons, the heavenly bodies, day and night, seed-time and harvest,—all set an example of undeviating regularity. Why should man, the only thinking, be the only disorderly work of Almighty power!

But whilst we are asserting the necessity of seasons of prayer, let us not be suspected of attaching undue importance to them; for all these are but the frame work, the scaffolding, the mere mechanical and subsidiary adjuncts; they are but the preparation for Christian worship; they remind us, they intimate to us, that an important work is to be done, but are no part of the work itself.

They, therefore, who most insist on the value of stated devotions, must never lose sight of that grand, and universal prime truth, that wherever we are, still we are in God's presence; whatever we have is His gift; whatever we hope is his promise; feelings which are commensurate with all time, all places, and limited to no particular scenes or seasons.

There is in some, in many it is to be feared, a readiness to acknowledge this general doctrine, which miscalled natural religion teaches but who are far from including in their system the peculiarities, the duties, the devotions of Christianity. These are decorous men of the world who, assuming the character of philosophical liberality, value themselves on having shaken off the shackles of prejudice, superstition, and system.—They acknowledge a Creator of the universe, but is in a vague and general way. They worship a Being, 'whose temple is all space;' that is, every where but in the human heart. They put Him as far as possible from themselves. Believing that He has no providential care of them, they feel no personal interest in Him. God and nature are with them synonymous terms. That the creation of the world was His work, they do not go the length of denying; but that its government is in His hands, is with them very problematical.

In any case, however, they are assured that a Being of such immensity requires not the little-

ness of superstitious forms, nor the petty limitation, of stated seasons, and regular devotions; that he is infinitely above attending to our paltry concerns, though he himself anticipated this objection, when he condescended to declare, 'He that offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me.'

One says *he* can adore the Author of nature in the contemplation of his works; that the mountains and the fields are *His* altar for worship. Another says, that his notion of religion is to deal honestly in his commerce with the world; both insist that they can serve God any where and every where.—We know they can, and we hope they do; but our Saviour, who knew the whole make of man, his levity, instability, and unfixedness, and who was yet no friend to the formalist or the superstitious, not only commands, at the hour of prayer, our entering into the closet; but our shutting the door, a tacit reproof perhaps of the indevotion of the Sadducean, as well as the publicity of the Pharisaic religion, but certainly, an admonition of general obligation.

This, indeed, is not the place to enter on that mass of concurring evidence which so irresistibly confirms the especial truth of Christianity. But is it not extraordinary that these men who overlook, or rather inquire not into, that accumulation of evidence in the exhibition of miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecy—that is, who do not read the Bible—should not at least attend to one species of evidence more immediately within their reach, and more intelligible to common observation; we mean the confirmation derived to the proofs of Scripture, from the history of the world, from their avowal of moral evil, their careful cultivation, where it suits them, of habits of an opposite nature, their practical and prudential maxims, where they have an end to pursue, an interest to gain. Do not similar rules, applied to Christian principles, and delivered in the Divine record, prove clearly that our Divine teacher 'knew what was in man?'

In treating of prayer, it would be a superfluous labour to address unbelievers with the same arguments or persuasions which we would humbly propose to such as aver, with whatever degree of conviction, their belief in Christianity. It would be folly to address them with motives drawn from a book which they do not believe, or do not read. With those who are ignorant of the first principles of religion, or those who reject them, we have no common ground on which to stand. St. Paul, with his usual discrimination, has left us an example in this as well as in all other cases. With the philosophical Athenians he confined his reasonings to natural religion. To the Jewish king, Agrippa, who 'believed the prophets,' in telling the story of his own conversion, he most judiciously introduced the great doctrines of remission of sins and justification by faith.

If the Pyrrhonist in question were to see a genuine Christian character delineated in all its dimensions, marked with its fair lineaments, and enlivened by its quickening spirit, such, for instance, as is exemplified in the character of St. Paul, he would consider it as a mere picture of the imagination; and would no more believe its reality than he does that of Xenophon's Prince, the Stoic's Wise Man, Quintilian's Perfect Orator, or any other Platonic or Utopian representation. Or could he be brought to believe its actual existence, he would set such a man far above the necessity of prayer: he would emancipate him from any such humbling practice; he would enthrone him on his own independent worth; for how should he ever suspect that such a man would ever pray at all, much less would be in prayer more abundant, in humiliation more profound, in self-renunciation more abased?

Is it not probable that some of those enquiring minds, who adorned the porch and the academy, as well as those more favoured men who saw the future, through the dim and distant perspective of prophecy, would have rejoiced to see the things which you see, and have not believed?

How gratefully would many of these illustrious spirits have accepted advantages which you overlook! How joyfully would they have received from Him who cannot lie, the assurance that if they would seek of Him that truth after which they 'were feeling,' they should find it! How gladly would that sublime and elegant spirit, whose favourite theme was pure spiritual love, have listened to the great apostle of love; to him who caught the flame as he leaned on the bosom of his affectionate master!

How would this same exalted genius, who taught the immortality of the soul to the bright, yet blind Athenians—he, whose penetrating mind rather guessed, than knew what he taught—whose keen eye caught some glimpses of a brighter state through the darkness which surrounded him—how would he have gloried in in that light and immortality which the gospel revelation has brought to light!—but with what unspeakable rapture would he have learned that He who revealed the life could give it: that He who promised immortality could bestow it! With what obedient transport would he have heard this touching apostrophe, at once a strong reproof and a tender invitation—'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!—'Ye philosophising cavillers, who live in the meridian splendour of this broad day, 'how will *you* escape, if you neglect so great a salvation?'

But if pride, the dominant intellectual sin, keeps the sceptic aloof from the humiliating duties of devotion; the habitual indulgence of the senses, in another class, proves an equal cause of alienating the heart from prayer.

The man absorbed by ease and enjoyment, and sunk in the relaxing softness of a voluptuous life, has a natural distaste to every thing that stands in opposition to the delights of that life. It is the smoothness of his course which makes it so slippery. He is lost before he feels that he is sinking. For whether we plunge at once from a precipitous height, or slide down from it on an inclined plane, still, while there is a yawning gulf at the bottom, our destruction is equally inevitable.

The systematic but decorous sensualist is one whose life is a course of sober luxury, of measured indulgence. He contrives to reconcile an abandonment of sound principle with a kind of

orderly practice. He enquires rather what is decent than what is right, what will secure the favourable opinion of the world, especially his own class, rather than what will please God. His object is to make the most of this world. Selfishness has established its throne in his heart. His study is to make every thing and every person subservient to his own convenience, or pleasure, or profit, yet without glaringly trespassing on the laws of propriety or custom. Self is the source and centre of all his actions; but though this governing principle is always on the watch for its gratification, yet, as part of that gratification depends on a certain degree of reputation, it frequently leads him to do right things though without right motives; for the main-spring sometimes sets the right a-going as well as the wrong.

He goes to church on all public occasions, but without devotion; gives alms without charity; subscribes to public institutions without being interested in their prosperity, except as they are frequently succeeded by a pleasant dinner and good company, and as the subscription list of names he knows will be published. He lives on good terms with different, and even opposite classes, of men, without being attached to any; he does them favours without affection, knowing that he shall have occasion to solicit favours in return, for he never does a small kindness without a view to asking a greater.

He deprecates excess in every thing, but always lives upon its confines.

Prayer enters not into his plan—he has nothing to ask, for he has all in himself—thanksgiving is still less his practice, for what he has he deserves.

He has read that 'to enjoy is to obey,' and he is always ready to give this cheerful proof of the most unlimited obedience. He respects the laws of the country, especially such as guard property and game, and eagerly punishes the violators of both. But as to the laws of God, he thinks they were made to guard the possessions of the rich, to punish the vicious poor, and to frighten those who have nothing to lose. Yet he respects some of the commandments, and would placard on every post and pillar that which says 'thou shalt not steal;' whilst he thinks that which says 'thou shalt not covet' might be expunged from the decalogue.

If you happen to speak of the helplessness of man, he thinks you are alluding to some paralytic; if of his dependence, to some hanger-on of a great man; if of his sinfulness, he adopts your opinion, for he reads the Newgate calendar. But of sin, as an inherent principle, of the turpitude of sin, except as it disturbs society, he knows nothing; but religion as a principle of action, but prayer as a source of peace or a ground of hope, he neither knows nor desires to know. The stream of life glides smoothly on without it; why should he ruffle its placid flow? why should he break in on the course of enjoyment with self-imposed austerities? He believes himself to be respected by his fellow-men, and the favour of God is not in all his thoughts. His real character the great day of decision will discover. Till then he will have two characters.

'Soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,' is perhaps the state of all others, which most disqualifies and unfits for prayer. Not only the apostrophe excites the bodily appetite, but the SOUL is called upon to contemplate, to repose on, the soothing prospect, the delights of that voluptuousness for which the 'much goods are laid up.' Thou fool! that soul which thou wouldest quicken to such base enjoyment, that soul shall this night be required of thee.

Thus we see what restrains prayer in these two classes of characters. The sceptic does not pray, because he does not believe that God is a hearer of prayer. The voluptuary, because he believes that God is such a one as himself, and because he has already gotten all that he wants of Him. His gold, and the means of gratifying his sensuality, would not be augmented by the dry duties of devotion; and with an exercise which would increase neither, he can easily dispense.

Errors in Prayer, which may hinder its being answered.—The proud man's Prayer.—The patient Christian—False Excuses under the pretence of Inability.

ALL desire the gifts of God, but they do not desire God. If we profess to love him, it is for our sake: when shall we begin to love him for himself? Many who do not go the length of omitting prayer, but pray merely from custom, or education, frequently complain that they find no benefit from prayer; others, that they experience not the support and comfort promised to it. May not those who thus complain, and who perhaps are far from being enemies to religion, find, on a serious examination of their own hearts and lives, some irregularity in desire, similar to that just mentioned, to be the cause of their discontent, and alleged disappointment?

We are more disposed to lay down rules for the regulation of God's government, than to submit our will to it as he has settled it. If we do not now see the efficacy of the prayer which he has enjoined us to present to him, it may yet be producing its effect in another way. Infinite wisdom is not obliged to inform us of the manner, or the time of his operations; what he expects of us is to persevere in the duty. The very obedience to the command is no small thing, whatever be its perceptible effects.

Under the apparent failure of our prayers, the source of our repinings must be looked for in the fact of our own blindness and imperfection; for the declarations of the Gospel are sure; their answer must be found in the grace of God in Christ Jesus, for his mercies are infallible. Wherever there is disappointment, we may be assured that it is not because he is wanting to us, but because we are wanting to ourselves.

The prophet's expression, 'the iniquity of our holy things,' will not be thoroughly understood except by those who thus seriously dive into the recesses of their own heart, feel their deficiencies, mark their wanderings, detect and lament their vain imaginations and impertinent thoughts. It is to be regretted that these worldly trifles are far more apt to intrude on us in prayer, than the devout affections excited by prayer are to follow us into the world. Busi-

ness and pleasure break in on our devotions; when will the spirit of devotion mix with the concerns of the world?

You who lament the disappointment of your requests, suffer a few friendly hints.—Have you not been impatient because you receive not the things that you asked, at your own time? How do you know that if you had persevered God might have bestowed them in His time? He certainly would, had He not in his wisdom foreseen they would not have been good for you; and therefore, in His mercy withheld them. Is there not some secret, unsuspected infidelity lurking behind such impatience? Is it not virtually saying, there is no God to hear, or that He is unfaithful to His promises? For is it not absolute impiety to insinuate an accusation that the Supreme Judge of men and angels is capable of injustice, or liable to error? God has pleasure in the prosperity of His children. He neither grants nor denies any thing which is not accurately weighed and measured; which is not exactly suited to their good, if not to their request.

If we pray aright, it may please God not only to grant that for which we pray, but that for which we do not pray. Supplicating for the best things, we may receive inferior and unrequested things, as was the case with Solomon in his prayer for wisdom. God will not forget our labour of love. If he does not seem to notice it at present, he may lay it by for a time when it may be more wanted.

In prayer we must take care not to measure our necessities by our desires; the former are few, the latter may be insatiable. A murmuring spirit is a probable cause why our petitions are not granted. The certain way to prevent our obtaining what we desire, or enjoying what we have, is to feel impatient at what we do not receive, or to make an improper use of what has been granted to our prayers.

Or you may perhaps address God with sinister and corrupt views; as if you had left his omniscience out of his attributes; as if you thought him such an one as yourself; as if he might be entrapped with the 'secret ambush of a specious prayer.' Your design in the application of the boon you solicit may not be for his glory. It may be the prayer of ambition, cloaked under the guise of more extensive usefulness; it may be the prayer of covetousness, under the pretext of providing for your family. It may be the prayer of injustice, a petition for success in some undertaking for yourself, to the circumvention of another's fairer claim. God, in mercy to our souls, refuses the gift which would endanger them.

Thus, then, if we ask and receive not, because we ask deceitfully or blindly, we must not wonder if our prayers are not answered. Or, if we obtain what we solicit, and turn it to a bad account, or to no account at all, we must not be surprised if Divine grace is withheld, or withdrawn.

The same ill results may be expected if we ask formally, or carelessly. Who has not felt, that there is a kind of mechanical memory in the tongue, which runs over the form, without any aid of the understanding, without any concurrence of the will, without any consent of the affections? For do we not sometimes implore God to hear a prayer, to which we ourselves are not attending? And is not this presumptuously to demand from him that attention, which we ourselves are not giving to our own requests, even while we were in the act of making them?

A mere superficial form, by lulling the conscience, hardens the heart. The task is performed, but in what manner, or to what result is not inquired. Genuine prayer is the homage of the soul to God, and not an expedient to pacify Him.

If you observe the form, but forget the dispositions it is intended to produce, it is evident the end of such prayer is not answered. Yet be not so far discouraged by feeling no sensible effect from prayer as to discontinue it; it is still a right thing to be found in the way of duty.

But, perhaps, you neglect to implore the Spirit of Christ towards the direction of your prayers, and His intercession for their acceptance. As there is no other name through which we can be saved, so there is no other through which we can be heard: we must not sever his mediation from his atonement. All His divine offices are not only in perfect harmony, but in inseparable union.* Or, perhaps, you have used the name of the Redeemer for form's sake, or as an accustomed close to your petitions, without imploring his efficacious grace in changing your heart, as well as in pardoning your sins.

Perhaps you think it is a sufficient qualification for acceptable prayer, that you are always forming good intentions; now, though these make up the value of good actions, yet good intentions, not acted upon when occasion invites and duty calls, will not lessen, but inflame the reckoning. For does it not look as if you had resisted the offer of that Holy Spirit, which had originally prompted the intention? And may it not induce Him to withdraw his blessed influences, when they have been both invited and rejected?

Do you never, by unwholesome reading, fill the mind with images unfavourable to serious exercises? The children of the pure and holy God should feed on the bread of their father's house, and not on the husks of the prodigal!

Do you never use profanely or lightly, that name, which is above every name? He who made the ear, shall he not hear? and if he has heard, during the day, his awful name used by the thoughtless as an expletive, or an imprecation, will he in the morning be called on as a Saviour, and in the evening as an intercessor?

But no profession of faith, however orthodox, no avowal of trust in Christ, however confident, no intreaty for the aid of the Spirit, however customary, will avail, if it be not such an influential faith, such a practical trust, such a living devotedness, as shall be productive of holiness of heart and life, as shall tend to produce obedience to the commands, and submission to the will of God.—This is an infallible test, by which you may try every doctrine, every principle of the gospel. We do not mean the truth of them,

* We observe with regret, that, in many forms of prayer, the aid of his mediation is much more frequently implored, than the benefits of his death and merits. He is, indeed, our divine Intercessor, but his mere intercession is not the whole source of our dependence on him.

for that is immutable; but your own actual belief, your own actual interest in them. If no such effects are visible, we deceive ourselves, and the principles we defend, are not those by which we are governed.

Prayer is so obviously designed to humble the proud heart of the natural man, by giving him a feeling sense of his misery, his indigence, and his helplessness, that we should be unwilling to believe, that even the proudest man can carry his pride to the Throne of Grace, except to supplicate deliverance from it; yet such a character is actually drawn by him who knew the thoughts and intents of the heart of man, and a little consideration will teach us, that the 'two men who went up into the temple to pray,' were not intended as individual portraits, but as specimens of a class.

The proud man does not perhaps always thank God that he is not guilty of adultery, or extortion, to which vices he may have little temptation; nor does he glory in paying tithes and taxes, to which the law would compel him. Yet is he never disposed, like the Pharisee, to proclaim the catalogue of his own virtues? to bring in his comparative claims, as if it were a good thing to be better than the bad? Is he never disposed to carry in his eye, (as if he would remind his Maker of his superiority,) certain persons who are possibly less the objects of Divine displeasure, than he, by his pride and selfishness may have rendered himself; although his regularity in the forms of devotion may have made him more respectable in the world, than the poor reprobated being whom he praises God he does not resemble. It is the abasement, the touching self-condemnation, the avowed poverty, the pleaded misery of the destitute beggar that finds acceptance. It is the hungry whom God's mercy fills with good things, it is the rich in his own conceit, whom his displeasure sends empty away.

Whenever you are tempted to thank God that you are not like other men, compare your own condition with that of the afflicted and the bereaved among your own friends; compare yourself with the paralytic on his couch, with the blind beggar by the way-side, with the labourer in the mine; think on the wretch in the galleys; on the condemned in the dungeons of despotic governments; on the miserable beings in our own prisons, those loathsome abodes of sin and wretchedness. Above all, think, and this is the intolerable acme of sin in the inflictor, and of misery in the sufferer; think on the wretched negro chained in the hold of a slave ship! Think seriously on these, and put pride into your prayer if you can. Think on these, not to triumph in your own superiority, but to adore the undeserved mercy of God, in giving you advantages to which you have no higher claim, and let your praise of yourself be converted into prayer for them.

For there are no dispositions of the heart which are more eminently promoted by prayer, than contentment and patience. They are two qualities of the same colour, but of different shades, and are generally, when found at all, found in the same breast. Both are the offspring of genuine religion, both nurtured by cordial prayer. The cultivation of the one, under easy circumstances, prepares for the exercises of the other under more trying situations. Both emanate from the same divine principle, but are drawn out by different occasions, and varying circumstances.

Content is the tranquillity of the heart, prayer is its aliment; it is satisfied under every dispensation of Providence, and takes thankfully its allotted portion, never enquiring whether a little more would not be a little better; knowing, that if God had so judged, it would have been as easy for him to have given the more as the less. That is not true content, which does not enjoy as the gift of infinite wisdom what it has, nor is that true patience, which does not suffer meekly the loss of what it had, because it is not his will that it should have it longer.

The contentment of the irreligious man is apathy, his patience either pride or insensibility. The language of the patient man under trials is, it is the Lord.—Shall a living man complain? is his interrogation. 'A good man,' says Solomon, 'is satisfied from himself.' Here the presumptuous might put in *his* claim to the title. But his pretension arises from his mistake, for his satisfaction is *with himself*, that of the Christian with Providence; it arises from the grace of God shed abroad in his heart, which is become a perennial spring of consolation and enjoyment; and which, by persevering prayer, is indented into his very soul. Content knows how to want and how to abound; this is the language of equanimity: 'shall I not receive evil from the hand of the Lord, as well as good,' this is the language of patience in speaking of Providence. Content is always praising God for what she possesses; patience is always justifying Him for what she suffers. The cultivation of the one effectually prepares us for the exercise of the other. But these dispositions are not inherent in the human heart. How are they generated? by the influences of the Holy Spirit. How are they kept alive? by heart-felt devotion.

The prosperous man of the world, exulting in any recent success, may acknowledge, 'the Lord gave,' but it is only Christian patience can say, 'the Lord taketh away,' and even bless Him for the resumption of His gift. The contented, patient Christian, has the same keen feelings, the same fond attachments with other men, for, though his passions are regulated by religion, they are not totally extinguished.

Under the pressure of any affliction, *thy will be done*, as it is the patient Christian's unceasing prayer, so it is the ground of his unvarying practice. In this brief petition he finds his whole duty comprised and expressed. It is the unprompted request of his lips, it is the motto inscribed on his heart, it is the principle which regulates his life, it is the voice which says to the stormy passions, 'Peace! be still!' Let others expostulate, he submits. Nay, even submission does not adequately express his feelings. We frequently submit, not so much from duty as from necessity; we submit, because we cannot help ourselves. Resignation sometimes may be mere acquiescence in the sovereignty, rather than conviction of the wisdom and goodness of God; while the patient Christian not

only yields to the dispensation, but adores the dispenser. He not only submits to the blow, but vindicates the hand which inflicts it; 'the Lord is righteous in all his ways.' He refers to the chastisement as a proof of the affection of the chastiser. 'I know that in very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be afflicted.' He recurs to the thoughtlessness of his former prosperity. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' and alludes to the trial less as a punishment than a paternal correction. If he prays for a removal of the present suffering, he prays also that it may not be removed from him, till it has been sanctified to him. He will not even part from the trial till he has laid hold on the benefit.

Perhaps the impediment which hinders the benefit of prayer in characters apparently correct, may be the fatal habit of indulging in some secret sin, the private cherishing of some wrong propensity, the entertaining of some evil imagination. Not being accustomed to control at other times, it intrudes when you would willingly expel it; for a guest which is unreservedly let in at other seasons, and cordially entertained, will too frequently break in when you desire to be alone.

The Scriptures are explicit on this subject. It is not merely the committing actual sin that ruins the comfort growing out of prayer; the divine prohibition runs higher; its interdiction is more intimately interior; it extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The door of heaven is shut against prayer under such circumstances. 'If I regard iniquity in my *heart*, the Lord will not hear me.' A cherished corruption in the mind is the more likely to interpose between God and the soul, because it does not assume the shape and bulk of crime. A practical offence, the effect of sudden temptation, is more likely to be followed by keen repentance, deep self-abasement, and fervent application for pardon; whereas to the close bosom sin, knowing that no human charge can be brought against it, the soul secretly returns with a fondness facilitated by long indulgence, and only whetted by a short separation. Vain, covetous, malignant, impure thoughts, habitually fostered by the imagination, are more likely to start out into action, are a more probable preparation for a bolder sin, than many who indulge them believe or intend.

It was, perhaps, this acute, experimental feeling which led David to pray to be delivered from 'secret sins;' these, he was probably conscious, had led to those 'presumptuous sins,' which had entangled his soul and embittered his life; and whose dominion he so frequently and fervently deprecates. This, it is to be feared, may be the case with some, whose language and exterior cause them to be ranked with the religious; these are, at least, the dangers to which they are most exposed. It is, therefore, that our Lord connects, in indissoluble union, watching with prayer.

Perhaps, when the conscience is more than usually awakened, you pray with some degree of fervour to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin. But, if you stop here, your devotion is most imperfect. If you do not also pray to be delivered from its power and dominion over your heart and life, you do not go much further than the heathens of old. They seem to have had a strong feeling of guilt, by their fond desire of expiating it by their sacrifices and lustrations.

Of their terror of its punishment we have many intimations in their fables; for what is fable to us, was probably to them obscure history, or wild tradition worked up into an absurd but amusing mythology. The eternity of their punishments is strongly implied in the insatiable thirst and ungratified appetites of Tantalus; his misery augmented by that flowing water and those tempting fruits which hung in his sight and mocked his appetites, not unlike the anguish of Dives, which was rendered more intolerable by beholding the blessedness of those on the other side of the great gulf. The profitless toils of Sisyphus, and of the daughters of Danaus, whose ever failing efforts prove their labours to be infinite, and their punishment eternal. The wheel of Ixion, which, as it was to be in perpetual motion, so the punishment was to have no end; a doctrine not so strongly held by many Christians, as it seems to be implied in this blind mythology.

Will you not then be most unweariedly fervent in prayer to the God of mercy for deliverance from the dominion of that sin which, if not forsaken as well as lamented, will be inevitably followed by that punishment which you deprecate, and which will never end? But such is the love of present ease, and the desire of respite, that you think, perhaps, it is better not 'to be tormented before the time.' How many now in a state of irreversible misery wish they had been tormented sooner, that they might not be tormented forever! But with you it is not yet too late. With you the day of grace, which to them is over, is not yet past. Use it then without delay, instead of persisting in laying up fresh regrets for eternity.

But too many deceive themselves, by imagining that when they have pronounced their prayer, the duty is accomplished with the task, the occult medicine being taken, the charm is to work of itself. They consider it as a duty quite distinct and unconnected with any other. They forget that it is to produce in them a principle which is to mix with all the occurrences of the day. Prayer, though not intended as a talisman, is yet proposed as a remedy. The effect of its operation is to be seen in assisting to govern the temper, in bridling the tongue, in checking, not only calumny but levity, not only impure, but vain conversation.

But we have a wonderful talent at deceiving ourselves. We have not a fault for which we do not find an apology. Our ingenuity on this head is inexhaustible. In matters of religion men complain that they are weak, a complaint they are not forward to urge in worldly matters. They lament that their reluctance to pray arises from being unable to do what God, in his word, expects them to do. But is not this virtual rebellion, only with a smooth face and a soft name? God is too wise not to know exactly what we *can* do, and too just to expect from us what we *cannot*.

This pretence of weakness, though it looks

like humility, is only a mask for indolence and a screen for selfishness.

We certainly *can* refuse to indulge ourselves in what pleases us, when we know it displeases God. We *can* obey his commandments with the aid of the infused strength which he has promised, and which we *can* ask. It is not He who is unwilling to give, but we who are averse to pray. The temptations to vice are strengthened by our passions, as our motives to virtue are weakened by them.

Our spiritual enemy would not be so potent, if we ourselves did not put arms into his hands. The world would not be so powerful an enchantress, if we did not assist the enchantment, by voluntarily yielding to it; by insensibly forsaking Him who is our strength. We make apologies for yielding to both by pleading their power and our own weakness. But the inability to resist is of our own making. Both enemies are indeed powerful but they are not irresistible. If we assert the contrary, is it not virtually saying 'greater are they who are against us than He that is for us?'

But we are traitors to our own cause; we are conquered by our own consent; we surrender, not so much because the conqueror is powerful, as because the conquered is willing.

Without diminishing any thing of *His* grace and glory, to whom every good thought we think, every victory over sin we obtain, is owing—may it not add to our happiness, even in heaven, to look back on every conflict we maintained with our grand spiritual enemy, every triumph over the world, every victory over ourselves? Will not the remembrance of one act of resistance then, far surpass every gratification now, which the three confederated enemies of our souls may present to us?

It is not merely by our prayers that we must give glory to God. Our Divine Master has expressly told us wherein His Father is glorified; it is 'when we bring forth much fruit.' It is by our works we shall be judged, and not by our prayers. And what a final consummation is it that obedience to the will of God, which is our duty here, shall be our nature hereafter! What is now our prayer shall then be our possession; there the obligation to obey shall become a necessity, and that necessity shall be happiness ineffable.

The various evils here enumerated with many others not touched upon, are so many dead weights on the wings of prayer; they cause it to gravitate to earth, obstruct its ascent, and hinder it from piercing to the throne of God.

God our Father.—Our Unwillingness to please Him.—Forms of Prayer.—Great and Little Sins.—All Sin an Offence against God.—Benefit of Habitual Prayer.

The distinction between the personal nature of Faith, and the universal character of Charity, as it is exercised in prayer, are specifically exhibited in the two pronouns which stand at the head of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer. We cannot exercise faith for another, and therefore can only say, *I* believe. But when we offer up our petitions, we address them to *our* Father, implying that He is the author, governor, and supporter, not of ourselves only, but of his whole rational creation. It conveys also a beautiful idea of that boundless charity which links all mankind in one comprehensive brotherhood. The plural *us*, continued through the whole prayer, keeps up the sentiment with which it sets out, tends to exclude selfishness, and to excite philanthropy, by recommending to God the temporal as well as spiritul wants of the whole family of mankind.

The nomenclature of the Divinity is expressed in Scripture by every term which can convey ideas of grandeur or of grace, of power or of affection, of sublimity or tenderness, of majesty or benignity; by every name which can excite terror or trust, which can inspire awe or consolation.

But of all compellations by which the Supreme Being is designated in his holy word, there is not one more soothing, more attractive, more endearing than that of Father; it includes the idea of reconciliation, pardon, acceptance, love. It swallows up His grandeur in His beneficence. It involves also the inheritance belonging to our filial relation. It fills the mind with every image that is touching, and the heart with every feeling that is affectionate. It inspires fear softened by love, and authority mitigated by gratitude. The tenderest image the Psalmist could select from the abundant store-house of his rich conceptions to convey the kindest sentiment of God's pity towards them that fear Him, was that it resembles the pity of a 'father for his *own children*.' In directing us to pray to our Father, our Divine Master does not give the command without the example. He every where uses the term He recommends. 'I thank Thee, Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth!' and in the 17th of St. John he uses this endearing name no less than seven times.

'Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth,' was the ill-understood prayer of the inquiring disciples. To us this petition is granted before it is made. Does He not show himself to all as a Father, in the wonders of his creation, in the wonders of our being, preservation, and support? Has he not, in a more especial manner, revealed Himself to us as a Father in the sublime wonders of his word, in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the perpetuated gift of the Holy Spirit? Does He not show Himself our Father, if, when we have done evil, He withholds His chastening hand; if, when we have sinned, He still bears with us; if, when we are deaf to his call He repeats it; if, when we delay, He waits for us; if, when we repent, He pardons us; if, when we return, He receives us; if, when in danger, He preserves us from falling; and if, when we fall, He raises us?

We have a beautiful illustration of the goodness of God as a merciful and tender Father in the deeply affecting parable of the Prodigal Son. Though the undone spendthrift knew that he had no possible claim on the goodness he had so notoriously offended, yet he felt that the endearing name of Father had an eloquence

that might plead forgiveness of his offence, though he feared not for a restoration to affection and favour. But while he only meekly aspired to a place among the servants, while he only humbly pleaded for a little of their redundant bread, he was received as a pardoned, reconciled, beloved child.

Yet the human heart is not easily warmed into gratitude, or softened into love, or allured to imitation, because it takes only slight and transient views of the divine benignity.—What God has done for us, and what we have really done against ourselves, will, in the great day of decision, crown Him with glory, and ourselves with shame. What we think we do for our own benefit in temporal concerns is so animated, so earnest, so unremitted—what are we called to do for God—which ultimately, indeed, would be done for ourselves—is so little, so reluctant, so heartless, as to bear no sort of comparison. In the former case, every thing is a gratification; in the latter every thing is a sacrifice.

We think much of the smallest instance of self-denial if it be for God; if it be an act of acknowledgment to the most gracious of all Fathers; if it be a tribute of homage to the King of Kings, however large or lasting the promised recompence. But we think little of any present privation of our own, if it insure to us a a longer subsequent enjoyment, though but for a season.

In speaking of the manner in which we should address our Heavenly Father, it is to be observed there may be evident differences in the state, both of the mind and circumstances, for which the best written forms of prayer can make no provision. We ourselves can alone know those varieties, and the petitions which expressly belong to them. We are sometimes under the influence of particular tempers, which we wish to cultivate and improve; in this case, we shall naturally use addresses very different from those which the prevalence of unfavourable tempers or wrong dispositions require.

As to the outward events in which we are concerned—for *accident* is a term which has no place in the Christian's vocabulary—God in every dispensation is at work for our good. In more prosperous circumstanees He tries our gratitude; in mediocrity our contentment; in misfortunes our submision; and as every new situation calls into exercise some new virtue, by consequence it calls for some alteration in the mode of our devotions. The prayers of yesterday and to day will consequently be as different as the circumstances—these are some of the advantages of private over public prayer.

The great and general topics, are, however, of a fixed, unalterable nature, on which, though we may be more or less diffuse, according to the state of the mind, yet the term and spirit will require little variation. This is more especially the case with respect to praise and thanksgiving; and to express these, the use of stated forms may occasionally come in with much advantage, as the cardinal points to be expressed here must be ever the same. Invariably must the glory and honour of whatever is good be ascribed to the great source of light and life, the giver of every good and perfect gift; and the addition in secret, of particular clauses of praise for personal mercies, will not be difficult to find where gratitude is really felt.

A deep sense of his corruption will powerfully draw the real penitent to an humbling avowal of sin in prayer; but it is to be feared that some, who, because they cannot charge themselves with flagrant offences, do not consider a contrite confession of the sins of the heart, and of the daily life, an indispensable part of their devotions. But God will charge many with sin who neglect to charge themselves. Did they attend to the remonstrance of a conscience not laid asleep by neglect, or quieted by palliatives, they would find that were the daily *omissions* alone, of even their best days, registered and presented to them; they would form no inconsiderable catalogue for repentance.

There are too many who do not consider that all sins are equally a breach of the Divine law. Without pretending to bring all sins, small and great, to one common level, we should remember that *all* sin is an offence against a gracious Father.

In that profoundly self-abasing prayer of David, after the commission of the two black offences which disgraced his otherwise exemplary life; though he deeply felt his barbarous treatment of his brave general, in first dishonouring his wife, and then exposing him to meet inevitable death in fore-front of the hottest battle—yet, in praying to be delivered from this blood-guiltiness, he bequeathed an important lession to posterity, when in the lowly prostration at the throne of God, his first cry was, 'against *Thee*, *Thee* only, have I sinned, and done this evil in *Thy* sight,' plainly declaring, that all sin is, in the first instance, a sin against God.

While the most worldly are ready enough to exclaim against notorious sins, or against any sins carried to the greatest excess, to smaller offences they contrive to be tolerably reconciled. They think the commission of these not inconsistent with the profitable use of prayer in their formal way of using this customary exercise.

They are also sufficiently lenient to certain degrees of great sins; and various are the modifications and distinctions in their logic, and not over-correct the gradations in their moral scale of degrees. They do not consider that it is the extirpation, and not merely the reduction, of any sin, which is to procure them that peace and comfort for which they sometimes pray, and which they wonder they do not receive as an answer to their prayers.

They forget that the evil of sin is not to be measured by its magnitude only, but by the spirit of disobedience which it indicates towards a generous Father,—a Father whose commands are all founded in mercy and love, and who considers every voluntary fault as no light offence when committed against supreme authority, exercised with perfect tenderness.

But it is their reluctance to part with the remaining degrees, their wish to retain these modified sins; it is their favourite reserves to which they still cling, that prevent that peace which is promised to the victory, I had almost said to the omnipotence, of prayer.

For it is not so much the nicely measured quantity, as the nature of sin, which constitutes its malignity, and obstructs the benefit of prayer. The inferior degree which is cherished, will, without earnest supplication to God, be ready to become the excess which is deprecated, whenever the appropriate temptation shall present itself. For, however our compassionate Father may pardon the unpremeditated fault, yet how can we expect Him to forgive any degree of sin that is allowed, that is even, in a certain measure, intended to be committed? Diminution, however, is a favourable step, if, by perseverance in prayer, it leads gradually to extirpation.

Habitual prayer may prove a most effectual check to any doubtful or wrong action, to which circumstances may invite us during the day on which we are entering—the very petition to our Heavenly Father—'deliver us us from evil,' forcibly felt and sincerely expressed, may preserve us from being seduced into it. And is not the praying Christian less likely to 'fall into temptation,' than they who neglect to pray that they may not be led into it?

The right dispositions of the heart, and the fervour of devotion reciprocally excite each other. A holy temper sends us to prayer, and prayer promotes that temper. Every act of thanksgiving tends to make us more grateful, and augmented gratitude excites more devout thanksgiving.

The act of confession renders the heart more contrite, and deeper contrition induces a more humbling avowal of sin. Each, and all, send us more cordially to the Redeemer: the more fervent the prayer, the more entire is the prostration of the whole man at the foot of the cross.

The Doctrine of Imputed Sanctification, newly adopted.—The old one of Progressive Sanctification newly rejected.—Both Doctrines injurious to Prayer.—St. Paul's Character.

We have hitherto spoken of errors in prayer. We come now to errors of opinion, which supersede the necessity of prayer itself. There are moral as well as speculative corruptions gaining ground amongst us, and there is an involution of one in the folds of the other. When men once indulge themselves in any deviation from the course so plainly marked out, in that only unerring *road-book*, the gospel of Jesus Christ, they can never be sure where the first turning off may lead them.

When a man, with more ingenuity than sober judgment, wishes to introduce a novel error; in order to work successfully, and prevent the suspicion of his design, he commonly seizes on some acknowledged truth for his basis. On this truth he raises his own fanciful superstructure, but with little departure at first from his avowed design; so that his gradual deviation from it makes the error continue still to look so much like truth, that ordinary observers will not easily detect where the old truth ends, or where the new fabrication totally changes the character of the original edifice.

The great and glorious doctrine of the New Testament was to exalt the Saviour and to humble the sinner; the new doctrine is to exalt the sinner also, and in that proportion to establish and secure him in sin. For if the Saviour's righteousness by transfer becomes so far the believer's righteousness, as to become, in the new language, his own personal holiness, he has in his own person 'whereof to glory,' and any further attainment is anomalous; or at best this transfer is even less rational, and evidently more removed from common sense as well as from charity, than the doctrine of supererogation itself; for that only teaches that some men were rich in good works enough and to spare; but this, instead of the friendly disposal of such superfluous wealth, teaches that we have none worth keeping, and that if we had there is a provision made for rendering it utterly useless.

A distorted truth, then, is worse than an original falsehood, because it deceives the injudicious and ill-informed by retaining some little vestige of the truth they had been taught to venerate. Thus, they who pretend to add new glory to the character and offices of Christ, are in effect dishonouring by misrepresenting him. It is a fearful fact, that the holiest doctrine may be perverted, till, instead of its being the source of salvation, it becomes a fountain of impiety. Instead of humbling the sinner, it confirms him in sin; instead of purifying, it corrupts; instead of sobering, it inebriates; and lands him on a daring and presumptuous confidence. Instead of promoting the cause of God, as it professes, it advances that of Satan. It is a false light which leads to utter darkness, for 'if the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!'

This error is so much worse than any other sin, as by fair and legitimate deduction it renders all virtue anomalous, and consequently all prayer ridiculous. Virtue cannot be needed, where to be like-minded with Christ is replaced, or made synonymous with having his holiness substituted for our own; and prayer cannot be upheld in any one of its essential qualities, where no room is left in the heart for self-distrust, meekness, lowliness of spirit, the fear of offending God, and the sense of dependance on him for 'more grace.'

Much has also been advanced in favour of another kindred doctrine, a doctrine with which St. Peter must have been utterly unacquainted, when he exhorted his converts to 'GROW in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.' The preceding opinion having encouraged the new proselytes, for they can create as well as destroy, has called another into existence, *that there is no such thing as progressive sanctification.* This novel doctrine, if practically adopted, would not fail to contribute its full share to the extermination of any remains of moral goodness, which its precursor might have left behind. It may indeed deserve some little toleration, when its founder shall have been able to produce one individual child of Adam, who is already as good as he ought to be, or even as he might have been.

If this doctrine be true, a large portion of Scripture must be abandoned to the clippers and mutilators of the sacred volume; for what becomes of the gracious promise of being 'renew-

ed from day to day?' what of the precept 'to increase and abound more and more?' what of the incessant inculcation of this command, repeated in all the various forms which language could supply; a command of which neither the variety of the illustration, nor of the language which conveys it, ever alters the idea, an idea which, like a golden thread, runs through the whole fabric of the New Testament.

We have been accustomed to hear that fervent prayer, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, is the grand instrument of this renewal; and it is on this ground that we have ventured to introduce the subject here as connected with the general design of these pages. But the present doctrine completes what the former had commenced, and renders prayer wholly inapplicable to all spiritual ends: it leaves us nothing to implore, but merely temporal advantages; to ask for things only which will end when this life ends. It would abolish the necessity of every petition in the Lord's prayer, except that for our daily bread.

Why will not those who profess to make the Bible the only rule of their faith and practice, learn from that Bible, that diffidence and reverential awe, a frank avowal of their own ignorance, a humble withholding from intruding into unrevealed things, and devout gratitude for the glorious things which are revealed, best become blind, ignorant and dependent creatures?

If this newly invented doctrine were true, what would become of the useless interval of life, useless as to all possibility of improvement, which is the great end of life, the interval between the decisive moment of complete sanctification and our closing scene?

The unanswerable argument in favour of progressive holiness, is the progress itself. The man to whom it was asserted, that there was no such thing as motion, made the most definitive answer,—he got up and walked.

Every advance of the Christian inclines him to push on to still further advances. But under the influence of this stationary principle the busy current of life would become a stagnant pool. It is motion which gives the sense of spiritual, as well as natural life. It is progress which gives the sustaining feeling; not of independent, but of infused strength. Hope, which is the pulse of spiritual life, would not only intermit, but stand still. 'Is this all,' would the disappointed Christian say? 'Shall I never be more holy than I now am? I do not find the right sort of rest in being a fixture.' Torpor is not ease, numbness is not relief. It is exercise, not indolence, which induces safe and wholesome repose.

New difficulties, fresh trials, unknown temptations may yet assail us in our mortal journey, which will require new applications to the Throne of Grace for support. With that support promised to prayer, though 'Alps on Alps arise,' we need not be discouraged. For if our progress be an upward, it is an onward path, and the acclivity diminishes the higher we ascend. Difficulties may be great, but with the grace of God they will not be insuperable. God is not only strong, but Strength. Yet let us not aim at an assent above our promised support. In aspiring to reach a visionary elevation, we lose the height we had actually gained.

It is curious to observe, how naturally one invention involves another. We find an instructive illustration of this truth in a Pagan fable. Dædalus was not only made a prisoner himself in the labyrinth of his own projecting, but like the projectors of the new theological metaphysics, he was no sooner involved in its mazes, than he went on to study a new and still wilder contrivance. But his next invention, his wings of wax, in which he trusted to secure his flight, in their ultimate result betrayed their insufficiency. His incautious companion, by mounting above the prescribed region of safety, exposed his artificial wings to be melted by the sun, as a punishment for approaching it too nearly. His fate was the inevitable consequence of his temerity.

If we were completely and instantaneously sanctified, such a state would boldly contradict the character of our human condition, every where described in Scripture, namely, that life is to the end a journey, a conflict, a race, a warfare, whereas in the new scheme all would be peace; the Christian would have no more to tempt, no more to fear, no more to resist, in short, earth would be heaven.

Every thing that is great is progressive.—The noblest things are the longest in attaining their perfection. This analogy subsists in nature, and in grace. Surely, then, there is no assignable period, when our virtues will be incapable of addition; when our duties will be finished; when our piety will have soared to such a pitch as to render a higher elevation impossible, as to render prayer, not only unnecessary, but absurd.

Saint Paul's conversion was indeed instantaneous, but it was miraculous. Yet though it was attended with circumstances peculiar to itself; though the shining light from heaven surrounded him; though, to evidence the miracle, he heard the voice of the Lord Jesus himself; though his natural sight was taken from him, preparatory to the opening of his spiritual eyes; though his change was of this distinguished character, yet did he stop short there? So far from it, he only began to cry out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do*? Thus we see, that the instantaneous conversion was prayer; practical prayer; prayer with involved doing; prayer which denoted progress.

If ever progressive sanctification was exhibited in the life, as well as writings, of any one man more than another, it was in this heroic champion of divine truth. If ever one man more than another had a right to depend on his own safe state, it was the divinely illuminated Saint Paul.

Yet did *he* spend his after-life in self-satisfaction and indolent security? Did *he* ever cease to watch, or pray, or labour? Did *he* ever cease to press the duty of prayer on his most established converts? Did *he*, in the confidence of supremely eminent gifts, ever cease himself to pray? Were *his* exertions ever abridged? *his* self-denial ever diminished? Did *he* rest satisfied with present, though supernatural attainments? Did *he* remember the things which were behind? Did *he* live upon the good he

had already done, or the grace he had already received? Did *he* count himself to have attained? Did he stop in the race set before him? Did not he press forward? Did not his endeavours grow with his attainments? Did not his humility, and sense of dependence outstrip both? If *he* feared being a castaway, after the unutterable things he had seen and heard, and after the wonders he had achieved, shall the best man on earth be contented to remain as he is? If it were attempted, the most sanguine man on earth would find it to be impossible; nothing either in nature or in grace 'continueth in one stay.' He who does not advance, is already gone back. —This glorious, because humble Apostle, went on in progressive sanctification, he continued to grow and to pray, till he at length attained to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

But what enabled this unparalleled man to maintain to the end, this painful conflict? It was the same support which is still offered to the meanest Christian. It was humble, fervent, persevering prayer. It was the spirit of supplication, infused and sustained by 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost,' and presented through the divine Mediator.

And what the Apostle did in his own person, we repeat, he unweariedly pressed upon all his converts. He exhorted them to pray for themselves, and for each other, in the same spirit in which 'he bowed his own knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that they might be rooted and grounded in love; that they might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.'

It is obvious why God does not give us the full measure of his grace; it is in order that we may be induced to pray for it; and that prayer which we are commanded continually to repeat for greater degrees of grace, is a standing proof of that imperfection in us which requires it, is a perpetual intimation, that we stand in need of fresh supplies, and larger measures of this super-induced strength than we have yet attained.

A sincere Christian must know, because he must feel, that he is an imperfect Christian; and to rest satisfied in a state of imperfection is not 'fighting the good fight,' is not 'finishing our course' in the way our beginning promised. As we advance, Providence assigns us new employments, new trials. Sanctification will never have reached its ultimate point, without that persevering progress which the Scriptures every where inculcate. Do we not rob ourselves of the reward promised to those who strive to go on unto perfection, if we are stopped short by the fatal delusion, that we have already reached it?

There is a fearful denunciation in the Apocalypse, and it is made the closing passage of the sacred canon; it is made a fence, as it were to shield divine truth from the additions and mutilations of bold intruders; no less than a tremendous menace, that 'to him who adds unto these things, God shall add to him the plagues written in this book. To him that takes away, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.'

Character of those who expect salvation for their Good Works.—Of those who depend on a Careless Nominal Faith.—Both these characters unfavourable to Prayer.—Christianity a Religion of Love which disposes to Prayer, exhibited in a third character.

We proceed now to make some observation on two different classes of Christians, who, without neglecting prayer, obstruct its efficacy by certain opinions in immediate connection with their practice; opinions, which, though in direct opposition to each other, yet, if Christianity be true, are neither of them safe.

The one, with a pretence of faith, profess to know God; but in works, in a great measure deny him; the other are working out their own salvation, but it is without fear or trembling; they work in their own strength, without looking unto God to enable them 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

While multitudes are ruining themselves by a fatal reliance on the merit of their own works, it is, perhaps, not saying too much to assert that more are undone by a loose, traditional, unexamined dependence on the Saviour. If many are wrong who think to purchase heaven by their own industry, more err by this cheaper mode of an indefinite and careless reliance on the ill-understood promises of the Gospel. If we cannot, of these two evils, determine which is greatest, it would not be difficult to prove that both are equally unfavourable to fervent prayer.

The careless liver who trusts in an unfounded hope, deceives, himself, because he thinks his trust, though he never inquires into it, looks more like grace.

Good works are rather less likely to deceive always, because those who maintain their superiority as a doctrine, cannot but see how far they fall themselves in practice, short of their profession; so far as to render it evident, that good works are with much greater sedulity performed by that sound class of Christians, who utterly reject any confidence in the performance of them. The former make salvation the easiest possible acquisition; the other believe it to be difficult, but fancy that the difficulty is to be overcome by a few more good deeds; which shall we say is the more misleading opinion?

Yet it must be confessed, that in this age of speculative religion, many do not sufficiently insist on these indispensable indications of a true and lively faith. For, after all, are not the right actions of a consistently holy life, the most unequivocal outward signs of an inward and spiritual grace? Not to insist on them, is to despise the value of those substantial evidences which our Lord himself made the criterion by which to judge of men,—'by their fruits ye shall know them.' The tree of life is no barren tree; it bears all manner of fruits.

There is indeed less necessity than ever to decry good works. Men are not so violently addicted to them, as, by the warnings given against them, one might be led to suppose. To exalt good works as the procuring cause of salvation, is to put them in the place of Christ. To depreciate good works, is to depreciate such a life as Christ has given us both the command, and

the example to lead; that command, of which the language was always one, 'if ye love me, keep my commandments;' and that example which presents such a tissue of holy actions, as nothing but Divinity could exhibit, yet enlightened and assisted humanity may and must aspire to imitate.

With this command and this example, devotion was always indissolubly connected.—Previously to giving his Divine pattern for the due performance of prayer, he alluded to the actual duty as already well understood and regularly practised; for doubtless he had habituated them to the duty, before he said, '*when* we pray,'—'After this manner therefore pray you.'

Faith is the principle which first led the sinner to apply for grace and mercy to the Redeemer of sinners. It is the same principle, which, by its gradual operation, leads to the renewing of his nature, the purifying his heart, and the sanctifying his conduct. This faith, with its practical consequences, must be sought for, by the only means through which it can be obtained, the influence of the Holy Spirit on humble, fervent, spiritual prayer.

But there is another, and, it is to be feared, a large class, who do good without being good. Though this may be too frequently the case; though it is the motive which determines on the quality of the action, yet, if the best action will not save the best man, there is little hope of its efficacy towards the salvation of a bad one.

Perhaps the man in question is charitable; but his charity may be stimulated by his vanity—a too common, but most misleading motive. Perhaps he does a deed of bounty from the too usual hope that this good action may be thrown into the opposite scale against a bad one; perhaps he hopes that his acts of benevolence may atone for the irregularities of a disorderly life—but, be this as it may, do not discourage his giving, let him continue to give, the act may improve the principle, he may in time detect the difference of his internal feelings in the performance of a good and bad action.—Perhaps the repetition of his good deeds may lead to a diminution of his bad ones. The passion of shame sometimes operates usefully, and every passion being under the control of God, may eventually be made the instrument of good.

And who does not remember instances in which the frequently repeated bounty was the unprompted feeling of a compassionate and liberal heart, of a heart tender and kind, though yet unsanctified by religion?

Yet who would restrain the right action? Who would forbid the gentle deed of charity? Who would wish to aggravate his perhaps awful account by withholding his hand? Who would willingly add this omission of what is right to his aggregate sum of what is wrong? Who would not even hope that it may prove a leading step to what is better? Who would not hope that, as good principles naturally tend to good actions, yet though it is reversing the usual order, for the stream to lead back to the fountain, yet who knows but the repetition of good actions may not only deter him from such as are bad, but may put his mind into such a frame as may lead him to examine the true principle of action, and thus to find, that though he has unhappily begun at the wrong end, that the right end is not even yet unattainable? Who can say that he may not be brought to examine his own heart, and be thus brought to the exercise of cordial prayer; by that he will be taught to know that 'if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'

Our compassionate Redeemer cherished every hopeful appearance. When he saw some symptoms of goodness in the young Ruler 'He loved him.' But his amiableness was not religion. Though his obedience to the commandments was less defective than that of many a high professor; like others, who confidently trust in their own merit, he inquired not, it is to be feared, so much for improvement, as from a sense of conscious integrity and the hope of commendation—he inquired what was yet wanting to the perfection of his character.

He who knew all things, already knew that his love of money was greater than his love of God. Here he saw that this promising character was vulnerable. The one thing he wanted was more than the many things he possessed. He failed in the trial. He had some concern about his soul, but more about his money; 'he went away sorrowing,' because he could not secure the one without the sacrifice of the other.

This is, with *us*, as much a test of character now, as it was then. It is not until we see a man acting in direct opposition to his predominant sin that we can venture to hope that he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, that he is even got on right ground. Zaccheus, who probably set out worse than the ruler, obtained this grand victory which the other missed.

This promising young man, in proclaiming his obedience to the commands, did not, however, boast of his devotion; yet, in so moral a character, we cannot suppose that prayer was altogether neglected—but it must have been that prayer of which our Lord says 'this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, their heart is far from me.' Had it been sincere prayer, it would have been influential prayer. No slave to avarice *can* worship God in spirit and in truth, and it is such that the Father seeketh to worship him. While the heart remains unchanged, the temper unsanctified, and the life unfruitful, the prayer has not been 'the effectual fervent prayer which availeth much.'

But there is a third character, who, thinking both the others lately noticed to be wrong, is determined himself to be right. He divides the difference, and adopts half of the scheme of each. He approves of works, but doubts their unassisted efficacy to obtain salvation. He honours the Redeemer, and places confidence in His sacrifice; but it is not a full, entire, unmeasured confidence. He thinks the Saviour so far competent towards effecting part of his salvation that he cannot be saved without Him, but dares not trust Him with the whole. So, without intending to be profane, he enters into a kind of partnership with Him whose blood was made a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He pro-

poses to contribute his own share to a contract of his own making, trusting that, as the Saviour knows he is not perfect, He will graciously supply whatever is deficient in his services, and make up what is lacking to their perfection, he himself continuing to be the working partner.

But if he be a thinking and a feeling character, if he be sincere in his desire after divine truth, though ignorant of its true nature, he at length begins to find that the plan, which he once thought so admirably contrived, does not answer. He finds that his spiritual interests do not advance. He begins to discover that his faith is cold, even his work is sluggish, and its progress unsatisfactory. His exertions want the inspiring principle, they want a genuine faith. He begins to discover, that even his good actions, on which he had been accustomed to rest half his salvation, are exceeded by those persons who do more, and put no trust in them. He at length through the influence of divine grace, begins to discover, or rather to feel, that while one party is exclusively exalting faith and the other works, both seem to have forgotten, or rather not to have known, that there is a third, a heavenly principle, a sacred cement without which their separation might be eternal, and even their junction would be imperfect. This sacred principle is LOVE. He now knows, experimentally, that Christianity is a religion of the affections, a sentiment of the heart—that it demands and confers that charity without which faith is dead, and works are vain. It is that heavenly sentiment, the love of God in Christ shed abroad in the heart, without which he that liveth is counted dead—that principle, without which the gift of prophecy, of mysteries, and all knowledge are unavailing—without which, giving all the goods to the poor, and even the body to be burned, will not profit—it is that indestructible attribute, which, when prophecies shall fail, and tongues shall cease, and knowledge vanish away, will *never* fail—it is that perfect thing which shall subsist when 'that which is in part shall be done away.' Love will survive when faith shall become sight, and hope shall be fruition. It shall constitute our happiness when we shall know God 'even as we are known. We shall possess it in its plenitude, when we shall wake up after His likeness. For love, like every other holy disposition, is but an emanation of the perfections of God, a spark from the original flame, an assimilation to his nature; since God is love.

In faith there may be fear; in works there may be constraint; but the inspiring, invigorating, endearing principle of love, changes the fearful slave into the affectionate child; transforms *Him* whom he had degraded as a hard master into a tender father.—This love makes labour light, service freedom, dependence safety, duty delight, sufferings easy, obedience pleasure, submission choice. By the warmth with which he now cultivates this 'Unction from the Holy One,' he will be rendered more meet for that fulness of joy which is at His right-hand for evermore.

He has now completely found his own utter insufficiency for this great work. He is in the situation of the newly converted apostle, who had doubtless previously exercised a regular but formal devotion, but it never would have been said of him before—'behold he prayeth!' He begins with lowly prostration to besiege the throne of grace; he now prays with a fervour he never felt before. He goes on to feel, not only its necessity, but its efficacy; gradually acknowledges its transforming power, and in time becomes sensible that its consolations are neither few nor small.

He now sees objects with other eyes, the visual ray is purged; to his rectified optics—'trees are become men.' He now exclaims, 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' But though he has left off boasting, he is so far from having left off working, that he is far more active in good deeds than when he trusted they would carry him to heaven; superinduced humility has completely led him to the secrets of his own heart. He feels wants and desires of which he was never before sensible; and wants felt readily find a tongue, readily suggest unbidden prayer, unprompted praise. Prayer is become the very breath of his being; praise is so much his delight, that he almost forgets it is his duty. It is no longer his task, but his refreshment. What lately seemed a necessary drudgery, the severe injunction of a hard master, is now the pleasant service of an affectionate child.

He is deeply grieved at the time he has lost, but he is no less disposed to retrieve than to lament the past. He has found that the soul will not be saved where the heart is not renewed. Of that renewal, by the influence of the Divine Spirit, he is become more and more sensible in his devotional exercises. With a deeper sense of imperfection as he becomes less imperfect, he is yet sensible of new dispositions, of new energies, of a heart to trust, and a will to obey. He feels an increasing desire of conformity to his Divine Saviour, and such a growth in grace, that with him to will and to do is almost become the same thing.

All the faculties which God has given him are filled with the idea of God. He retains Him in his *memory* by the recollection of His mercies—he retains Him in his *understanding*, by meditating on His perfections. By this intelligent faculty he reflects on what God is in himself, in His word, and to his own soul. In his *will*, he loves God, and laments that he ever loved any thing in comparison of Him. Thus all his intellectual powers, voluntarily as it were, press into the worship of God, or, in the fewer and better words of the Psalmist, he summons them all to assist in his devotions, saying, 'Let all that is within me praise the Lord.'

Prayer.—The Condition of its Attendant Blessings.—Useless Contention about Terms.

MEN contend more about words than about things. A misunderstanding respecting them causes more disputes than the subjects of which they are the signs. In speaking, for instance, of the connexion between prescribed duties and promised blessings, are there not certain inoffensive and well-meaning words which seem

to have brought more reproach on those who use them than their harmless, if not legitimate character, may be thought to deserve. One of them, indeed, might expect more gentle treatment on the single ground that it is very frequently to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

The obnoxious terms to which we here allude are *rewards* and *conditions*. We have in general avoided the use of them, not for any harm discoverable in them when used and understood in the scriptural sense, but for fear of creating an idea contrary to what was intended to be conveyed. In the legal sense they are very exceptionable, for in the one case we deserve nothing from God, and in the other we can do nothing of *ourselves*.

We do not presume to make conditions with God, but He condescends to propose them to us. In this latter case, it is free grace imposes the reasonable condition: his free grace bestows the unmerited reward.—Are not all the promises of the Gospel conditional? The beatitudes include both the condition and the reward. Our blessed Saviour, in his sermon, multiplies, and individualizes his promises. He gives us a string of articles of blessedness and recompence; the specific recompense to the specific duty; amongst others, mercy to the merciful; the kingdom of heaven to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; the vision of God to the pure in heart.

'The Holy Spirit consecrates the doctrine of *rewards*, by teaching the Apostle to connect it even with the very being of Omnipotence. God *is*,' and it immediately follows, that 'he is a *rewarder* of them that seek him.' Surely this is a condition, as much as the threat that he will punish those 'who know not God.' Every where, and particularly in the Psalms, prayer is made the condition of obtaining. In asking, seeking, and knocking, the condition and the reward most appropriately meet.

To those who come to the Redeemer, he has declared that 'they shall in no wise be cast out.' Their coming is the condition of their being accepted. 'Rest,' again, is the consoling promise which he makes to 'the heavy laden' who come to him. 'He that honoureth me I will honour,' is both a condition and a reward. What is the promise of pardon to repentance, but a condition? The negative denunciation is a condition. 'Ye will *not* come to me, that ye might have life.' 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; without faith it is impossible to please God.' Do not these imply the blessings attending the contrary temper? State the question thus: Shall we be heard, if we do not pray? Shall we be pardoned, if we do not repent?

'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' It is the love of God then, which is the condition of obtaining those things which the heart of man cannot conceive.

All the promises made to faith are conditions, as are those made to holiness. The good and faithful servants who well employed their ten and five talents, were rewarded by having their talents doubled; the punishment of their unprofitable companion was a conditional punishment. He had made no use of what was committed to him.

Why is that bright variety of promises, 'to him that overcometh,' repeated with such unwearied iteration, in the sublime visions of the Saint at Patmos? What is it but a beautiful concatenation of conditions and rewards, closed with that joyful climax, 'he that overcometh shall be a pillar in the temple of the Lord, and shall go no more out.' If language more clear can be found, if assurance more explicit can be given, if promises more distinct can be produced, we confess we know not where to look for them. Did not Moses himself, the most disinterested of men, look to the recompence of the reward? And did not a greater than Moses, 'for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame?'

Promises like these were the support, and triumph of his immediate apostles, and of their remotest successors; of Ridley, and Latimer, and Cranmer. They will still be the consolation of the Christian sufferer for righteousness sake to the end of time.—Let us not then forfeit our inheritance by slighting the promise.

'This is a reward wholly of grace in respect of our deserving, but of justice, on account of the purchase of it by the sacred treasures of Christ's blood, and the unchangeable tenor of the Gospel wherein God promises heaven to all obedient and true believers.'

The things may be called by other names, but they amount to the same meaning.—There is a proud disinterestedness which would seem to intimate, that, because we deserve nothing we expect nothing. Our expectation, it is true, arises entirely from God's goodness, and not at all from our merit. It arises especially from his fidelity, which leads him to make good his own engagement. He has Himself said, 'faithful is He that has promised.'

This view of the subject deducts nothing from that free salvation purchased for us by the death of the Redeemer. We repeat, it deducts nothing from the sovereignty of God. All the promises are the gracious offers of an amnesty by an insulted King, who condescends to offer a treaty to his rebellious subjects. We deserve nothing at his hands. He owes us nothing. Punishment we do indeed deserve 'if He were extreme to mark what is done amiss;' yet he declares that punishment is his strange work. He has reversed the attainder, by the sacrifice of his Son. The attainted rebel, instead of disputing about the terms of reconciliation, instead of proposing terms of his own, thankfully accepts what the king offers. Though our pardon hangs on a firm belief in the great truths he has revealed, let us not so explain these as to hazard or neglect the duties he has enjoined us to perform. If our faith, though sincere, is often weak, let us remember, that our obedience is even more imperfect than our faith; and let us, by fervent and unremitting prayer, labour at once to build up our faith which is weak, and to perfect our obedience which is defective.

God not only pardons as a merciful king, He enacts laws as a wise legislator; still the old revolutionary principles are continually

breaking out; to check which the sovereign proposes *terms* as proofs of our allegiance.—He does by no means annex salvation to them, but he requires them as marks of our repentance, as confirmation of our loyalty. He requires them as evidences, both of our faith and of our submission. By the infusion of a new spirit of life consequent on His pardon, the acquitted rebel adopts a new set of principles which show themselves by overt acts, suggested and nourished by fervent prayer.

We are aware that the term 'evidences' used above, is to many no less revolting, than those which we have previously noticed, but by this excessive affectation of disinterestedness and refining on the promises, we shall come to do away all moral obligation, we shall attenuate the substantial realities of Christianity into a meagre theory, reduce the fruitful principle of practical religion, to a dry and unproductive speculation, a barren thing to which nothing that is perceptible, palpable, tangible, and practical, is necessarily appended.

On the other hand, it is but too notorious, that the terms here humbly attempted to be vindicated and restored to their true signification, are too frequently made the sum and substance, the whole of religion, till the spirituality of the Gospel, and the great peculiarities of the religion of Jesus, are smothered in the heap of frigid human ethics.

It is by the promises annexed to these conditions, that the Christian is gradually brought to consider prayer not merely as a duty, but to value it as a privilege; and the more earnestly he cultivates the spirit of supplication, the more deeply will it enable him to penetrate into the recesses of his own heart. The more he discovers the evils which he there finds, he will be so far from being deterred by the discovery, from approaching to the fountain of mercy, that it will lead him to be more diligent as well as more fervent, in his application there. Nothing so favourably discovers to us our spiritual exigencies, nothing can quicken our petitions for their relief so powerfully, as the conviction of their actual existence.—In this full conviction, in this earnest application, the Christian at length feels the efficacy of prayer in its consolations, its blessedness, in its transforming power.

Vain Excuses for the Neglect of Prayer.—The Man of Business.—Case of Nehemiah.—Prayer against the Fear of Death.—Characters to whom this Prayer is recommended.

THERE are not a few, who offer apologies for the neglect of spiritual duties, by saying they believe them to be right, but that they are tempted from the exercise of them by idleness, or business, by company, or pleasure. This may be true, but temptations are not compulsions. The great adversary of souls may fill the fancy with alluring images of enjoyment, so as to draw us away from any duty, but it is in our own choice to indulge, and through grace to repel them. He may act upon the passions through outward objects, which introduce them to the mind through the senses, but the grace of God enables all who faithfully ask it, to withstand them.

If we were not at liberty to reject temptation, sin would be no sin. It is the offer of the grace of resistance not used, which makes the offender to be without excuse. All the motives and allurements to sin would be ineffectual, would we keep up in our minds what are its 'wages'—death; death spiritual, death eternal!

Of all the excuses for the neglect of prayer, the man of business justifies his omission to himself by the most plausible apologies.—Many of this class, active for themselves, and useful to the world, are far from disputing either the propriety, or the duty of prayer; they are willing however for the present, to turn over this duty to the clergy, to the idle, to women and children. They allow it to be an important thing, but not the most important. They acknowledge, if men have time to spare, they cannot spend it better; but *they* have no time. It is indeed a duty, but a duty not to be compared with that of the court, the bar, the public office, the counting-house, or the shop.

Now, in pleading for the importance of the one, we should be the last to detract from that of the other. We only plead for their entire compatability.

We pass over the instance of Daniel, a man of business and a statesman, and of many other public characters, recorded in Scripture, and confine ourselves to the example of Nehemiah. He was not only an officer in the court of the greatest king of the East, but it was his duty to be much in the royal presence. He was on a particular occasion, under deep affliction; for Jerusalem was in ruins! On a certain day his sadness was so great, as to be visible to the king, at whose table he was attending.

The monarch enquired the cause of his sorrow, and what request he had to make.—He instantly 'prayed to the God of heaven,' doubtless to strengthen him, and then made his petition to the king for no less a boon, than to allow him to rebuild the walls of the sacred city. His prayer preceded his request. It was that prayer, which gave him courage to present that petition, and which perhaps induced the sovereign to grant it. What a double encouragement is here given to the courtier, both to pray to God, and to speak truth to a king!

Though the plea of the man of business, for his own particular exemption, can by no means be granted, yet it is the sense he entertains of the value of his professional duties, which deceives him. It leads him to believe, that there can be no evil in substituting business for devotion. He is conscious that he is industrious, and he knows that industry is a great moral quality. He is rightly persuaded, that the man of pleasure has no such plea to produce. He therefore imposes on himself, with the belief that there *can* be no harm in substituting a moral for a religious exercise; for he has learned to think highly of morality, while he assigns to religion only an inferior degree in his scale of duties.

He usually goes to church once on the Sunday; but it does not at all infringe on his religious system to examine his accounts, to give

a great dinner, or to begin a journey on that day.

Now it is a serious truth, that there is no man to whom prayer is more imperatively a duty, or more obviously a necessity, than to the man of business; whether in the higher or the middle classes of society. There is no man who more stands in need of quieting his anxities, regulating his tempers, cooling his spirits by a devout application for the blessing of God; none to whom it is more necessary to implore the divine protection for the duties, or preservation from the dangers of the scene in which he is about to engage; none to whom it is more important to solicit direction in the difficultics which the day may produce; none on whom it is more incumbent to solicit support against the temptations which may be about to assail him; none to whom the petition for an enlightened conscience, an upright intention, a sound probity, and an undeviating sincerity, is of more importance.

What is so likely as prayer to enable him to stand prepared to meet the accidental fluctuations in his affairs, to receive without inebriation, a sudden flow of prosperous fortune, or to sustain any adverse circumstance with resignation?

Even persons in more retired situations, even those who have made considerable advances in religion cannot but acknowledge how much the ordinary and necessary cares of daily life, especially, how much any unexpected accession to them, are likely to cause absence and distraction in their devotions:—how much then ought they, whose whole life is business, to be on their guard against these dangers, to double their vigilance against them, and to implore direction under them.

Were the Christian soldier accustomed never to engage in the moral battle of daily life, without putting on this panoply, the shafts of temptation would strike with a feeble and erring blow; they would not so deeply pierce the guarded heart. And were fervent humble daily prayer once conscientiously adopted, its effects would reach beyond the week-day engagements. It would gradually extend its benign influence to the postponing of settling accounts, the festive dinner, and the not absolutely necessary journey, to one of those six days in which we are enjoined to labour. It would lead him to the habit of doing 'no manner of work' on that day, in which the doing of it was prohibited by the great Lawgiver in his own person.

We have more than once alluded to the diversities of character, occasional events, difference in the state of mind as well as of circumstances, which may not only render the prayer which is suitable to one man unsuitable to another, but unsuitable to the same man under every alteration of circumstances.

But among the proper topics for prayer, there is one which, being of universal interest ought not to be omitted. For by whatever dissimilarity of character, capacity, profession, station, or temper, the condition of man, and, of course, the nature of prayer, is diversified—there is one grand point of union, one circumstance, one condition, in which they must all meet; one state, of which every man is equally certain; one event which happeneth to all,—'it is appointed unto every man once to die.' The rugged road of sorrow, the flowery path of pleasure, as well as

'The paths of glory, lead but to the grave.'

In praying, therefore, against the fear of death, we do not pray against a contingent but a certain evil; we pray to be delivered from the overwhelming dread of that house which is appointed for all living—we are put in mind that all who are born must die!

'The end of all things is at hand.' To what purpose does the apostle convert this awful proclamation? Does he use it to encourage gloomy tempers, to invite to unprofitable melancholy? No: he uses the solemn admonition to stir us up to moral goodness—therefore, 'be sober'—he does more, he uses it to excite us to religious vigilance,—'and watch unto prayer.'

Some men, and they are not the best men, talk boldly of death, especially while they suppose it to be at a distance; but this boastful heroism is a very equivocal symptom of their being in a proper state to meet it. Others of a less confident, but not more serious cast of mind, take pains to keep it as far as possible from their thoughts, lest the indulging such gloomy reflections should make them uneasy, and embitter their present enjoyments. They banish it, indeed, from their thoughts, as they do other unpleasant subjects; but it is no proof that we do not fear a thing, because we manage to keep it out of sight; on the contrary, the effort betrays the very fear which it denies.

There is an inconsistency in the character of man, so preposterous, that we should not believe it, if we did not feel as well as see it. We continue eagerly to catch at the things which are always sliding from us, and which no grasp of ours can retain, whilst we forget the things that are not only hastening to meet us, but which will remain with us, not through time only, but eternity.

Others are afraid to think of death for the same reason, that they are afraid to make their will, lest it should bring it nearer: but we know that we will keep up the remembrance without accelerating the approach; familiarity with the thought is the best means of conquering the fear. It is not pusillanimity, but prudence, so to fear death as to fear to meet it in an unprepared state of mind; and that fear will always be safe and salutary, which leads to the preparation.

Prayer against the fear of death, by keeping up in us a constant remembrance of our mortality, will help to wean us from a too intimate attachment to the things we are so soon to quit. By this habitual preparation to meet our Judge, we shall be brought to pray more earnestly for an interest in the great Intercessor; and to strive more effectually against every offence which may aggravate the awfulness of that meeting.—Above all, such a prayer will more emphatically remind us that it was sin which brought death into the world, which introduces that original principle and first act of sin, from which all our natural evil, and practical offences are derived.

But let us not be accustomed to think of death

as a detached and separate object, as the mere insulated circumstance of its closing our eyes for ever on all we have been accustomed to cherish; let us not think of it only as a consignment to the narrow chambers of the tomb, but let us ever connect with the idea of death, the consoling assurance that to the real Christian, its sting is drawn out; this will fill the heart with boundless love and endless gratitude to Him who has extracted it. This thought of death, though it will keep up in the mind the anticipation of that night, which as to this world shall know no morning, will also keep up the glorious prospect of that eternal day which shall know no night.

Fervent prayer, that divine grace may prepare us for death, will, if cordially adopted, answer many great moral purposes. It will remind every individual of every class that 'the time is short'—that 'there is no repentance in the grave.'

To the *man of opulence*, who heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, prayer will be a constant memento: it will remind him that he walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; it will remind him of laying up treasures where thieves cannot enter, nor rust corrode.

The habit of praying against the fear of death, would check the pride of youthful *beauty*, by reminding her how soon it must say to the worm, Thou art my father, and to corruption, Thou art my mother and sister.

The *man of genius*, he who thought that of making many books there would be no end; who, in his zeal to write, had neglected to pray; who had thought little of any immortality but that which was to be conferred by the applause of dying creatures like himself; who, in the vanity of possessing talents, had forgotten that he must one day account for the application of them; if happily he should be brought to see the evil of his own heart, to feel the wants of his own soul, how intense will be his repentance, that he had loved the praise of men more than the praise of God! how fervently will he pray that his mercies may not aggravate the account of his sins; that his talents may not become the instrument of his punishment! How earnestly will he supplicate pardon, how devoutly will he 'give glory to God, before his feet stumble on the dark mountains!'

The *man of business*, to whom we have already adverted, who thought his schemes so deeply laid, his speculations so prudently planned, that nothing could frustrate them; who calculated that the future was as much in his power as the present, forgot that death, that grand subverter of projects, might interpose his *veto*. This man, who could not find time to pray, must find time to die—he may at length find—happy if he ever find it, that he cannot meet his end with a peaceful heart, and a resigned spirit, without the preparation of prayer for support in that awful period, 'when his purposes shall be broken off and all his thoughts perish.'

The *man of pleasure*, alas! what shall we say for *him*? He is sunk to the lowest step of degradation in the moral scale; he has not even human supports; he has robbed himself even of the ordinary consolations resorted to by ordinary men. He has no stay on which to lay hold, no twig at which to catch, no pretence by which to flatter himself into a false peace; no recollection of past usefulness; he has neither served his country; nor benefitted society—what shall we say for him? If he pray not for himself, we must pray for him—with God all things are possible.

The *patriot*, indefatigable in the public service, distinguished for integrity; but neglecting the offices of Christianity; whose lofty character power had not warped, nor cupidity debased, but whose religious principles, though they had never been renounced, had not been kept in exercise; a spirit of rare disinterestedness; a moralist of unblanched honour, but who pleaded that duty had left him little time for devotion! Should divine grace incline him at last to seek God, should he begin to pray to be prepared for death and judgment, he will deeply regret with the contrite cardinal, not that he served his king faithfully, but that his higher services had not been devoted to their highest object. In this frame of mind, that ambition which was satisfied with what earth could give, or kings reward, will appear no longer glorious in his eyes. True and just to his king, devoted to his country, faithful to all but his God and himself, he now laments that he had neglected to seek a better country, neglected to serve the King Eternal, the blessed and only Potentate; neglected to obtain an interest in a kingdom which shall not be moved. He feels that mere patriotism, grand as is its object, and important as is its end, will not afford support to a soul sinking at the approach of the inevitable hour, at the view of final judgment.

The *hero*, who, in the hot engagement, surrounded with the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance of war,' bravely defied death; forgot all that was personal, and only remembered—nobly remembered, his country, and his immediate duty;—animated with the glory that was to be acquired with his arm, and almost ready to exclaim with the Roman patriot;

> '——————————What pity
> That we can die but once to serve our country!'

yet this hero, if he had ever made a conscience of prayer, may he not hereafter find, that the most successful instrumentality is a distinct thing in itself, and will be different in its results, from personal piety? May he not find that, though he saved others, himself he cannot save?

If, however, in after-life, in the cool shade of honourable retirement, he be brought through the grace of God, to habituate himself to earnest prayer, he will deeply regret that he never entered the field of battle without imploring the favour of the God of battles; that he had ever returned alive from slaughtered squadrons, without adoring the Author of his providential preservation. If his penitence be sincere, his prayer will be effectual. It will fortify him under the mere depressing prospect of that death which is soon to be encountered in the solitude of his darkened chamber, without witnesses, without glory, without the cheering band, without the

spirit-stirring drum; without the tumultuous acclamation; with no objects to distract his attention; no conflicting concerns to divide his thoughts; no human arm, either of others or his own, on which to depend. This timely reflection, this late, though never *too* late prayer, may still prepare him for a peaceful dying-bed; may lead him to lean on a stronger arm than his own, or that of an army; may conduct him to a victory over his last enemy, and thus dispose him to meet death in a safer state than when he despised it in the field, may bring him to acknowledge, that while he continued to live without subjection to the Captain of his salvation, though he had fought bravely, he had not yet fought the good fight.

The Consolations of Prayer—Its Perpetual Obligation.

In addition to what has already been observed, as to convenient seasons for prayer, we cannot but remark, that many Christians have been enabled to convert their trials into blessings, by gradually bringing themselves to devote the hours of wakeful and even painful nights to devout meditation and prayer. By doing at first some violence to their inclinations, they have afterwards found in it both profit and pleasure. The night has been made to them a season of heart-searching thought and spiritual consolation. Solitude and stillness completely shut out the world; its business, its cares, its impertinences. The mind is sobered, the passions are stilled, it seems to the watchful Christian as if there were in the universe only God and his own soul. It is an inexpressible consolation to him to feel that the one Being in the universe, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, is the very Being to whom he has free access, even in the most unseasonable hours. The faculties of the mind may not, perhaps, be in their highest exercise, but the affections of the heart, from the exclusion of distracting objects, more readily ascend to their noblest object. Night and darkness are no parasites: conscience is more easily alarmed. It puts on fewer disguises. We appear to ourselves more what we really are. This detection is salutary. The glare which the cheerful day-light, business, pleasure and company, had shed over all objects, is withdrawn. Schemes which, in the day had appeared plausible, now present objections. What had then appeared safe, now, at least, seems to require deliberation. This silent season of self-examination, is a keen detector of any latent evil, which, like the fly in the box of perfume, may corrupt much that is pure.

When this communion with God can be maintained, it supplies deficiencies of devotion to those who have little leisure during the day; and, by thus rescuing these otherwise lost hours, it snatches time from oblivion, at once adds to the length of life, and weans from the love of it.

If the wearied and restless body be tempted to exclaim 'would God it were morning,' the very term suggests the most consoling of all images. The quick mind shoots forward beyond this vale of tears, beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death; it stretches onward to the joyful morning of the Resurrection; it anticipates that blessed state where there is no more weeping and no more night—no weeping, for God's own hand shall wipe away the tears; no night, for the Lamb himself shall be the light.

If disqualifying pain, or distressing languor, prevent the utterance of supplication, patience is itself a prayer, and a prayer which will not fail to be heard. We have a striking instance of an answer to silent prayer, in the case of Moses. In a situation of extreme distress, when he had not uttered a word, 'the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy crying.'

The tender mercy of our compassionate Father will make sense, and find meaning in a prayer which is almost unintelligible to the languid sufferer who offers it. God wants not to be informed, he wants only to be remembered, to be loved, to be sought.

If, however, in the conduct of this nightly watching, and this nightly prayer, your own stock of thought or expression is absolutely deficient, prophets and apostles will not only afford you the most encouraging examples, but most perfect assistance. More especially the royal treasury of king David lies open to you; and whatever are your wants, there your resources are inexhaustible.

What joyful appeals does the psalmist make to Him to whom the darkness and the light are both alike! 'Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon thee when I was waking?' 'In the night,' he again exclaims, 'I commune with my own heart, and search out my spirit.' And of this holy practice was he so little weary, that he resolved to persevere in it. 'As long as I live will I magnify Thee in this manner.' Similar to this is the apostrophe of the evangelical prophet—'With my soul have I desired Thee in the night.'

The Psalms of David exhibit the finest specimen of experimental religion in the world. They are attended with this singular advantage and this unspeakable comfort, that in them God speaks to us and we speak to Him. This delightful interlocution between the King of saints and the penitent sinner; this interchange of character, this mixture of prayer and promise, of help implored and grace bestowed, of weakness pleaded and strength imparted, of favour shown and gratitude returned, of prostration on one part and encouragement on the other, of abounding sorrow, and overflowing mercy, this beautiful variety of affecting intercourse between sinful dust and infinite goodness, lifts the abased penitent into the closest and most elevating communion with his Saviour and his God.

Yet, inestimable as are the Psalms of David, in every point of view, and especially for the purpose here recommended, as a refuge for the suffering body, the wakeful mind, the praying spirit, and the oppressed heart—that very sanctity, and depth of devotional feeling, which is their life-blood, may lead to a dangerous misapplication in the mouth of the irreligious. Holy expressions in prayer, and ebullitions of grateful praise, are more easily committed to the memo-

ry, than impressed upon the heart. And is there not some danger, that not only the mere formalist, but even the immoral man may apply to himself sentiments, declarations, assurances, and comforts, which can only belong to the real Christian? For instance; the arrogant man, as if, like the dervise in the Persian fable, he had shot his soul into the character he assumes, repeats with complete self-application, 'Lord, I am not high-minded;' the trifler says, 'I hate vain thoughts;' the irreligious, 'Lord how I love thy law.' He who seldom prays at all, confidently repeats, 'All the day long I am occupied in thy statutes.' The covetous, in the words of Paul or David, with as much self-complacency deprecates avarice, as if the anathema against it had ever opened either his heart or his purse.

On the other hand, as the hardest substances, by continual attrition, are at length penetrated, it is the pleasing task of charity to hope, that the habitual repetition of such feelings, sentiments, and principles may sink into the hard heart, may lead its possessor to look into himself, to compare what he feels with what he reads, and by discovering the discrepancy between his life and his prayers, may open his eyes on his own danger, till by the grace of God the holy vehicle of his hypocrisy may be made that of his conversion.

Perhaps you are a doubting, weak, and trembling penitent; not indeed doubting of the mercies of God, but of your own interest in them. This feeling may arise from a deep and humbling sense of your own sins and infirmities, rather than from any criminal unbelief. Here comes in to your relief a whole host of gracious promises, peculiarly adapted to your case. The tender images of 'the smoking flax,' and 'the bruised reed,' the promised acceptance of 'the contrite spirit, and the broken heart.' But beyond all praise is the consoling assurance of our great High Priest, that 'he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' Touched with them, not only when he was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' but now when he is even 'ascended to the glory which he had with his Father before the world began.'

How soothing is this expression of the Divine compassion! It is not barely the hearing or the seeing, it is the *feeling* of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted like as we are This is the most exquisite touch of sympathy; he not only suffered but was tempted; here indeed the resemblance has its limitation: for he was without sin. He knew the condition of 'being tempted,' but not that of yielding to it. It is this feeling of being tempted, which gives him such an intimate concern in the feeble fearful Christian. He sends the angel of his presence, and saves them. What a striking confirmation of the blessed truth, that in all our afflictions he is afflicted, is the awful interrogation, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou,'—not my church, but '*me*?'

It is a further encouragement to the dejected spirit, that the Almighty was not contented to show his willingness to pardon by single declarations, however strong and full. He has heaped up words, he has crowded images, he has accumulated expressions, he has exhausted language, by all the variety of synonymes which express love, mercy, pardon, and acceptance. They are graciously crowded together, that the trembling mourner who was not sufficiently assured by one, might be encouraged by another. And it is the consummation of the Divine goodness that this message is not sent by his ambassador, but that the King of kings, the blessed and only Potentate, condescends himself to pronounce this royal proclamation, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!' Forgiving indeed, but in consonance with his just demand of repentance and reformation, 'who will by no means clear the guilty.'

The ardent and affectionate Apostle of the Gentiles, within a very few verses, has also represented the Almighty under every character that is endearing and consoling. He denominates him 'the God of patience and of comfort,' 'the God of hope and of peace;' titles which are peculiarly addressed to all the exigencies of man, and graciously expressive of God's will and power to supply them. There is an appropriation of the terms to the state of the fallen children of mortality, calculated to take away all fear, and to fill the vacant room with love, and peace, and gratitude unspeakable.

Refuse not then to take comfort from the promises of God, when perhaps you are easily satisfied with the assurance of pardon from a frail and sinful creature like yourself whom you had offended. Why is God the only being who is not believed? who is not trusted? O thou that hearest prayer, why unto Thee will not all flesh come?

But though God's pardoning grace knows no bounds, his sanctifying grace is given by measure, is given as we use what we have already received. God seems to reserve in his own hands a provision for our humility, and thus keeps prayer in full exercise. The one is progressive in its operation, the other is full and free, bestowed, not for any righteousness in the receiver, but for that full and perfect oblation once made for sin. Is it not a most fallacious trust to expect that our sins will be blotted out without that habitual repentance annexed to the promise? It is vain to offer the bribe of burnt offerings, the thousands of rams, or the rivers of oil. God desires not to be paid for our pardon, nor profited by our offerings. He never sells his favours. The riches of the universe, which are indeed already his, could not procure the pardon of a single sinner, but he prescribes the duty, when he promises the pardon. 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.'

It would therefore supply ample matter for habitual prayer, had we only the sins of our nature to lament; but when to these we add our practical offences, oh, how great is the sum of them! Yet though they are more than we can express, they are not greater than God can forgive; not more than the blood which was shed for them can wash out.

But he to whom the duty of prayer is unknown, and by whom the privilege of prayer is unfelt, or he by whom it is neglected, or he who

uses it for form and not from feeling, may probably say, Will this work, weariseme even if necessary, never know an end? Will there be no period when God will dispense with its regular exercise? Will there never be such an attainment of the end proposed, as that we may be allowed to discontinue the means?

To these interrogatories there is but one answer, an answer which shall be also made, by an appeal to the enquirer himself.

If there is any day in which we are quite certain that we shall meet with no trial from Providence, no temptation from the world, any day in which we shall be sure to have no wrong tempers excited in ourselves, no call to bear with those of others, no misfortune to encounter, and no need of Divine assistance to endure it, on that morning we may safely omit our prayer.

If there is any evening in which we have received no protection from God, and experienced no mercy at his hands; if we have not lost a single opportunity of doing or receiving good, if we are quite certain that we have not once spoken unadvisedly with our lips, nor entertained one vain or idle thought in our heart, on that night we may safely omit praise to God, and the confession of our own sinfulness, on that night we may safely omit humiliation and thanksgiving. To repeat the converse would be superfluous.

When we can conscientiously say, that religion has given a tone to our conduct, a law to our actions, a rule to our thoughts, a bridle to our tongue, a restraint to every wrong passion, a check to every evil temper, then, some will say, we may safely be dismissed from the drudgery of prayer, it will then have answered all the end which you so tiresomely recommend. So far from it, we really figure to ourselves, that if we could hope to hear of a being brought to such perfection of discipline, it would unquestionably be found that this would be the very being who would continue most perseveringly in the practice of that devotion, which had so materially contributed to bring his heart and mind into so desirable a state, who would most tremble to discontinue prayer, who would be most appalled at the thought of the condition into which such discontinuance would be likely to reduce him. Whatever others do, he will continue forever to 'sing praises unto Thee, O Thou most Highest; he will continue to tell of Thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of Thy truth in the night season.'

It is true that while he considered religion as something nominal and ceremonial, rather than as a principle of spirit and of life, he felt nothing encouraging, nothing refreshing, nothing delightful in prayer. But since he began to feel it as the means of procuring the most substantial blessings to his heart; since he began to experience something of the realization of the promises to his soul, in the performance of this exercise, he finds there is no employment so satisfactory, none that his mind can so little do without; none that so effectually raises him above the world, none that so opens his eyes to its empty shadows, none which can make him look with so much indifference on its lying vanities; none that can so powerfully defend him against the assaults of temptation, and the allurements of pleasure, none that can so sustain him under labour, so carry him through difficulties; none that can so quicken him in the practice of every virtue, and animate him in the discharge of every duty.

But if prayer be so exhilirating to the soul, what shall be said of praise? Praise is the only employment, we had almost said, it is the only duty, in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise of our affections. Prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed, sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praises exempt from our mixture of infirmity or alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude, unknown even to the angels. They are unfallen beings; they cannot say as we can, 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us.'—Prayer is prospective. Praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future blessings. Prayer points the only way to heaven, 'praise is already there.'

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On Intercessory Prayer.

The social affections were given us not only for the kindliest, but the noblest purposes. The charities of father, son, and brother, were bestowed, not only to make life pleasant, but to make it useful; not only that we might contribute to the present comfort, but to the eternal benefit of each other.

These heaven-implanted affections are never brought into exercise more properly, nor with more lively feelings, than in intercessory prayer. Our friends may have wants which we cannot remove, desires which we cannot gratify, afflictions which we cannot relieve, but is always in our power to bring them before God; to pray for them whenever we pray for ourselves. This, as it is a most pleasant and easy, so it is an indispensable obligation. It is a duty which brings the social affections into their highest exercise, and which may be reciprocally paid and received.

The same Scriptures which expressly enjoin that supplication, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men, furnish also numerous examples of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. We need not dwell on the instance of the rain obtained by the prayers of Elijah, or the earlier availing intercessions of Moses, with other public deliverances effected in the same manner.

Though the perseverance of Abraham's prayer did not prevent the extermination of the polluted city, yet doubtless the blessing he solicited for it returned unto his own bosom, and the successive promises made by the Almighty Judge to the successively reduced number of the righteous, for whose sake the petition for preservation was offered, afford a proof of the Divine appro-

bation and a striking encouragement to persist in the duty of intercessory prayer. The promise of God was not withdrawn. The prayer was conditional, and could the petitioner have made up his very lowest compliment, the city had been saved. The interceding heart in any event is sure to gain something for itself.

Prayer is such an enlarger of the affections, such an opener of the heart, that we cannot but wonder how any who live in the practice of it, should be penurious in their alms; or, if they do give, should do it 'grudgingly or of necessity.' Surely if our prayer be cordial, we shall be more ready to assist as well as to love those for whom we are in the habit of making supplication to God. It is impossible to pray sincerely for the well-being of others, without being desirous of contributing to it. We can hardly conceive a more complete species of self-deception than that practised by an avaricious professor of religion, one who goes on mechanically to pray for the poor, whilst his prayer has neither opened his heart nor his purse. He may value himself on this, as on other instances of his ingenuity, in having found out so cheap a way of doing good, and go on contentedly, till he hear those tremendous words of exclusion, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.'

There is a generosity in religion. The same principle which disposes a Christian to contribute to the temporal interests of those he loves, inclines him to breathe his earnest supplication for their spiritual benefit. Not only does prayers for others promote natural affection, not only does it soften the heart of him who intercedes, but it is hoped that they for whom the intercession is made, may reap the benefit.

But our intercessions must neither dwell in generalities for the public nor in limitations to the wants of our particular friends.

The Christian is the friend of every description of the children of mortality. In the fulness of our compassion for the miseries of mankind, we pour out our hearts in prayer for the poor and destitute, and we do well. But there is another and a large class who are still more objects of our pity, and consequently should be of our prayer. We pray for those who have no portion in this world, but do we not sometimes forget to pray for those who have their whole portion in it? We pray for the praying servants of God, but perhaps we neglect to pray for those who never pray for themselves. These are the persons who stand most in need of the mercy of the Almighty, and of our Christian importunity in their favour.

Is it not affecting, that even into our devotions we are disposed to carry the regard we too highly indulge of the good things of this life, by earnestly imploring mercy upon those who want them; and by forgetting to offer our supplications in favour of those who are blinded by the too full enjoyment of them. If the one duty be done, should the other be left undone?

Happily we live in an age presenting many instances, where neither high station, nor great riches impede piety, or obstruct devotion. Yet, it is to be feared, that the general tendency of rank, and especially of riches, is to withdraw the heart from spiritual exercises, more than the hand from pecuniary bounty.

Let us then fervently include among the objects of our supplication that very pitiable and very necessitous class among the rich and great, if such a class there be, who live without any sensible feeling of the presence of God as acknowledged in prayer:—for those persons who never entertain a doubt of their own deserts, even if they do not deny Him who is the giver of the boundless blessings which lead them to forget Him.—Strange! that the very overflowing cup which ought to ensure gratitude should induce forgetfulness! strange! that prayer to God should be neglected in proportion to the magnitude of His bounties.

May the writer be permitted to enrich the penury of her own meagre composition with a beautiful extract from one whose unequalled rhetoric was always warmed by a deep sensibility, and occasionally tinctured with religious feeling—the eloquent and almost prophetic author of Reflections on the Revolution in France:—

'The English people are satisfied, that to the great, the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They too are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; something to relieve in the killing langour and overlaboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite to existence in the palled satiety which attends on all pleasures which may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated, and therefore, fruition defeated by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight; and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment.'

O you great ones of the earth, whom riches ensnare and prosperity betrays—be largely liberal, even from self-interest. Not, indeed, expecting to make the liberality you bestow a remuneration for the devotions you withhold. Scatter your superfluities, and more than your superfluities, to the destitute, if not to vindicate Providence, yet to benefit yourselves. Not, indeed, to revive the old pious fraud of depending for salvation on the prayers of others; yet still you may hope to be repaid, with usurious interest, from the pious poor, by the very tender charity of their prayers for you. Their supplications may possibly be so heard, that you may at length, be brought to the indispensable necessity, and the bounden duty of praying for yourselves.

As to the commanding duty of praying for our enemies, the most powerful example bequeathed to us in Scripture, next to that of his Divine master on the cross, is that of St. Stephen,

Even *after* the expiring martyr had ejaculated 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit,' he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' Let every instance of Roman greatness of mind, let every story of Grecian magnanimity be ransacked, and produce, who can, such another example. Theirs is tumour, this is grandeur; their is heroism, this is Christianity; *they* died for their country, Jesus for his enemies; *they* implored the gods for themselves, Stephen for his murderers.

The praying Christian in the World.—The Promise of Rest to the Christian.

As the keeping up a due sense of religion, both in faith and practice, so materially depends on the habit of fervent and heart-felt devotion, may we be permitted, in this place, to insist on the probable effects which would follow the devout and conscientious exercise of prayer, rather than on prayer itself?

As soon as religion is really become the earnest desire of our hearts, it will inevitably become the great business of our lives; the one is the only satisfactory evidence of the other: consequently the religion of the heart and life will promote that prayer by which both have been promoted.

They, therefore, little advance the true interest of mankind, who, under the powerful plea of what great things God has done for us in our redemption by His Son, neglect to encourage our active services in His cause. Hear the words of inspiration, 'Be not slothful;' 'run the race;' 'fight the good fight;' 'strive to enter in;' give diligence;' 'work out your own salvation;' 'God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love;' 'but when ye have done all, say, Ye are unprofitable servants, ye have done that which was your duty to do.'

But if, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, what shall we be if we have done nothing? Is it not obvious that the Holy Spirit, who dictated these exhortations, clearly meant that a sound faith in the word of God was meant to produce holy exertion in his cause? The activity in doing good of the Son of God was not exceeded by his devotion, and both gloriously illustrated his doctrines, and confirmed his divinity. Until we make thon our religion a part of our common life, until we bring Christianity, as an illustrious genius is said to have brought philosophy, from its retreat to live in the world, and dwell among men; until we have brought it from the closet to the active scene, from the church to the world, whether that world be the court, the senate, the exchange, the public office, the private counting-house, the courts of justice, the professional departments, or the domestic drawing-room, it will not have fully accomplished what it was sent on earth to do.

We do not mean the introduction of its language, but of its spirit: the former is frequently as incompatible with public, as it is unsuitable to private business; but the latter is of universal application. We mean that the temper and dispositions which it is the object of prayer to communicate, should be kept alive in society, and brought into action in its affairs. That the integrity, the veracity, the justice, the purity, the liberality, the watchfulness over ourselves, the candour towards others, all exercised in the fear of the Lord, and strengthened by the word of God and prayer, should be brought from the retirement of devotion to the regulation of the conduct.

Though we have observed above, that it is rather the spirit than the language of religion that should be carried into business, yet we cannot forbear regretting, that we seem to decline much from the sober usages of our ancestors. Formerly testamentary instruments were never made the mere conveyance of worldly possessions. They were also made the vehicles of pious sentiments, and always at least opened with a devout offering of the soul to Him who gave it. Indeed it is difficult to imagine how a man *can* write the words *my last will* without a solemn reflection on that *last act* which must inevitably follow it, and in view of which act he is making it. May not this alteration in the practice be partly ascribed to the decline of habitual prayer.*

But what fair opportunities have certain of the great officers of the law, especially in their *charges*, of giving to them a solemnity the most impressive, by adverting more frequently to the awful truths of Christianity! Even if such awakening appeals to the conscience should fail of their effects on the unhappy convicts to whom they are addressed, they may be of incalculable benefit to some of the numerous persons present. A counsel, a caution, a reproof, and exhortation, all on pure Christian principles, and thus coming from a profession to which it appears not immediately to belong, may especially from not being expected, produce consequences the most salutary. The terribly affecting circumstances of the moment, the appalling scene so soon to follow, must give an unspeakable weight to the most touching admonition. He who is judging the condemned violator of divine and human laws, stands as a kind of representative of the future Judge of quick and dead and will himself soon be judged by

* I beg leave to strengthen my own sentiments on this head, by quoting a passage from an eminent and truly pious barrister, with an extract from the last will of one of the greatest men of our age.

'Of late years, it has been the fashion (for there is a fashion even in the last act of a man's life) to omit these solemn preambles. I confess myself an approver of them, as believing it to be useful to the surviving relatives of the testator to draw their attention to the tremendous consequences of the separation of soul and body at seasons of impressibility and reflection.' By the following extract, from the will of the late Mr. Burke, it will be seen, that his sentiments, on this point, coincided with those above expressed. 'First according to the ancient good and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for His mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die at any place very convenient for its transport thither, (but not otherwise,) to be buried at the church of Baconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have part in the resurrection of the just.'—Roberts on Wills, vol. ii. p. 376.

Him, a consideration which makes his responsibility peculiarly tremendous.*

But to return,—Though we must not, in accommodation to the prevailing prejudices and unnecessary zeal against abstinence and devotion, neglect the imperative duties of retirement, prayer, and meditation; yet, perhaps, as prayer makes so indispensable an article in the Christian life, some retired contemplative persons may apprehend that it makes the whole; whereas prayer is only the operation which sets the machine going. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself. The only infallible incentive to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. It finds them work for every day in the week, as well as on Sundays.

The praying Christian, on going into the world, feels that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence—'I will *think* upon the commandments to DO them.' What the Holy Spirit has so indissolubly joined, he does not separate.

He whose heart has been set in motion in the morning by prayer, who has had his spiritual pulse quickened by a serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures, will find his work growing upon him in regular proportion to his willingness to do it. He is diligently exact in the immediate duties of the passing day. Though procrastination is treated by many as a light evil, he studiously avoids it, because he has felt its mischiefs; he is active even from the love of ease, for he knows that the duties which would have cost him little, if done on the day they were due, may, by the accumulation of many neglected days, cost him much. The fear of this rouses him to immediate exertion. If the case in question be doubtful, he deliberates, he inquires, he prays; if it be clear and pressing, what his hand finds to do, he does with all his might, and in the calls of distress he always acts on his favourite aphorism, that giving soon is giving twice.

Abroad how many duties meet him! He has on his hands the poor that want bread, the afflicted who want comfort, the distressed who want counsel, the ignorant who want teaching, the depressed who want soothing. At home he has his family to watch over. He has to give instruction to his children, and an example to his servants. But his more immediate, as well as more difficult work is with himself, and he knows that this exercise, well performed, can alone enable him wisely to perform the rest. Here he finds work for every faculty of his understanding, every conquest over his will, for every affection of his heart. Here his spirit truly labours. He has to watch, as well as to pray, that his conscience be not darkened by prejudice; that his bad qualities do not assume the shape of virtues, nor his good ones engender self-applause; that his best intentions do not mislead his judgment; that his candour do not degenerate into indifference; nor his strictness into bigotry; that his moderation do not freeze, nor his zeal burn. He has to controul his impatience at the defeat of his most wisely conceived plans. He will find that in his best services there is something that is wrong, much that is wanting; and he feels, that whatever in them is right, is not his own, but the gift of God.

He finds that his obedience is incomplete, that his warmest affections are languid, perhaps his best intentions not realized, his best resolves not followed up. In this view, though he is abased in dust and ashes in looking up to God as the fountain of perfection, he is cheered in looking up to him also as the fountain of mercy in Christ Jesus. He prays, as well as strives, that the knowledge of his own faults may make him more humble, and his sense of the divine mercies more grateful.

He will find that his faith, even though it does not want sincerity, will too frequently want energy. He has, therefore, to watch against cold and heartless prayer; though, perhaps, the humility arising from this consciousness is a benefit in another way. He feels it difficult to bring every 'thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' yet he goes on cheerily, willing to believe that what may be difficult is not impossible. He has to struggle against over anxiety for temporal things. He has to preserve simplicity of intention, consistency, and perseverance. He has, in short, to watch against a long list of sins, errors, and temptations, which he will find heavier in weight, and more in number, the more closely he looks into his catalogue.

The praying Christian in the world has, above all, to watch against the fear of men, as he may find it more easy to endure the cross than to despise the shame. Even if he have in a good degree conquered his temptation, he may still find a more dangerous enemy in the applause of the world than he found in its enmity. He has observed, that many amiable and even pious persons who are got above the more vulgar allurements of the world, who have surmounted all the temptations of a more sensual kind, who are no longer subdued by its softening luxuries, its seducing pleasures, its dazzling splendours, nor its captivating amusements, have not yet quite escaped this danger. The keen desire of its good opinion, the anxiety for its applause, ensnares many who are got above any thing else which the world has to offer. This is, perhaps, the last lingering sin which cleaves even to those who have made a considerable progress in religion, the still unextinguished passion of a mind great enough to have subdued many other passions.

The danger of the Christian in the world is *from* the world. He is afraid of the sleek, smooth, insinuating, and not discreditable vices; he guards against self-complacency. If his affairs prosper, and his reputation stands high, he betakes himself to his only sure refuge, humble prayer. He knows it is more easy to perform a hundred right deeds, and to keep many virtues in exercise, than 'to keep himself unspotted from the world,' than to hold the things of the world with a loose hand. Even his best ac-

* The late Lord Kenyon was neither afraid nor ashamed to introduce both the doctrine and language of Christianity on these occasions; and we have lately seen other valuable instances of the adoption of this practice.

tions, which may bring him most credit, have their dangers; they make him fear that 'while he has a name to live, he is dead.'

Though much above feeling any joy in vulgar acclamation, he is not insensible to the praise of those who are praised by others; but though not indifferent to the good opinion of good men, the praise even of the best is not his object: he knows that to obtain it, is not the end for which he was sent into the world. His ambition is of a higher order, it has a loftier aim. The praise of man cannot satisfy a spirit which feels itself made for immortality.

He feels that if he had no sin but vanity, the consciousness of that alone, would be sufficient to set him on his guard, to quicken him in prayer, to caution him in conduct.—He does not fear vanity as he fears any other individual vice; as a single enemy against which he is to be on the watch, but as that vice which, if indulged, would poison all his virtues. Among the sins of the inner man, he knows that 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer.' When he hears it said of any popular, and especially of any religious character, 'he is a good man, but he is vain.' He says within himself, he is vain, and therefore, I fear he is not a good man. How many right qualities does vanity rob of their value, how many right actions of their reward!

Every suspicion of the first stirring of vanity in himself, sends him with deeper prostration before his Maker. Lord what is man! shall the praise of a fellow-creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose ashes, must soon be mingled with my own, which may even before my own be consigned to kindred dust, shall *his* praise be of sufficient potency to endanger the humility of a being, who is not only looking forward to the applause of those glorious spirits which surround the throne of God, but to the approbation of God himself?

When those with whom he occasionally mixes, see the praying Christian calm and cheerful in the world, they little suspect the frequent struggles, the secret conflicts he has within. Others see his devout and conscientious life, but he alone knows the plague of his own heart. For this plague he seeks the only remedy; to prayer, that balm of hurt minds, he constantly repairs.

The praying Christian endeavours to make even what to some might seem casual expression in Scripture, matter of improvement. He is not contented to devote to the distressed his mere superfluities, he makes requisitions on his frugality to add to his contributions, and he learns this lesson from the highest model.

He observes that He who could feed thousands by a word of His mouth, yet took care not to let the miracle pass without grafting on it a moral maxim, for general use, a religious duty for general practice.—He who could have multiplied to any extent the twelve baskets, as He had done the five loaves, condescended to say, 'gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost; and that he might set an example of prayer in every possible form, He had previously *blessed* the simple but abundant meal, presenting, in this single instance, an union of three great qualities—generosity, economy, and devotion.

The practical Christian observes with grateful admiration, how Scripture has, as it were, let down to the plainest apprehension the habitual duty of constantly looking to God, by a familiar allusion taken from domestic life.—The fidelity, the diligent attention, the watchful observance of 'the eyes of a servant looking to the hand of his Master, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress,' is a simple illustration of the Christian's duty, equally intelligible to him who serves, and obligatory on him who is served.

To a worldly man, his own sin appears less than it is; to a good man, greater; not that he sees through a false medium; or aggravates the truth, or forgets the apostle's direction to think soberly; but while the nominal Christian weighs his offences in the scales of the world, the praying Christian brings him to the balance of the sanctuary. The former judges of sin only as he sees it in others; and the worst men in the rank above the vulgar, do not always appear so bad as they are. In his own heart he sees little, because with that heart he is not acquainted. Whereas his own bosom is the very place where the good man looks for sin, and his perceptions of what is wrong are so delicate, that he sees it in its first seed; in short, the one thinks himself worse than others, because he knows himself well; the other thinks himself better, because he knows himself not at all.

When we consider the conflicts and the trials of the conscientious, watchful, praying Christian, we shall estimate aright the value of the consoling promise of that eternal rest from his labours, which supports him under them. And though *rest* is one of the lowest descriptions of the promised bliss of heaven, yet it holds out a cheering prospect of relief and satisfaction to a feeling being, who is conscious of the fallen condition of his mortal nature in all its weakness and imperfection. *Rest*, therefore, is of itself, a promise sufficiently inviting to make him desire to depart and to be with Christ, even independently of his higher hope. The joy unspeakable, the crown of glory, and all those other splendid images of the blessedness of heaven exalt and delight his mind. But it is, though with a higher, yet with a more indefinite delight. He adores without fully comprehending the mighty blessing. But the promise of rest is more intelligible to the heavy-laden Christian; he better understands it, because it is so exactly applicable to his present want and feelings:—*this* is not our rest. It offers the relief longed for by a weary, frail, and feverish being. He who best knows what man wanted, promised to His disciples *peace and rest*, and His Divine Spirit has represented the state of heaven under this image more frequently than any other, as being in more direct contrast to its present state—a state of care, anxiety, and trouble, and a state of sin, the cause of all his other troubles. Perhaps this less elevated view of heaven may occur more rarely to persons of high-wrought feelings in religion, yet to the Christian of a contrary character, it is a never-failing consolation, a home-felt solace, the object of his fervent prayer. What a support to be persuaded that 'the work of righteousness is peace, and the

effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever!'

The Lord's Prayer, a model both for our devotion and our practice.—It teaches the duty of promoting schemes to advance the Glory of God.

It is not customary for kings to draw up petitions for their subjects to present to themselves; much less do earthly monarchs consider the act of petitioning worthy of reward, nor do they number the petitions so much among the services done them, as among the burthens imposed on them. Whereas it is a singular benefit to our fallen race that the King of kings both dictates our petitions, and has promised to recompense us for making them.

In the Lord's prayer may be found the seminal principle of all the petitions of a Christian, both for spiritual and temporal things; and however in the fulness of his heart he will necessarily depart from his model in his choice of expressions: into whatever laminæ he may expand the pure gold of which it is composed, yet he will still find the general principle of his own more enlarged application to God, substantially contained in this brief but finished compendium.

Is it not a striking proof of the divine condescension, that knowing our propensity to err, our blessed Lord should himself have dictated our petitions, partly perhaps as a corrective of existing superstitions, but certainly to leave behind Him a *regulator* by which all future ages should *set* their devotions; and we might perhaps establish it as a safe rule for prayer in general, that any petition which cannot in some shape, be accommodated to the spirit of some part of the Lord's prayer may not be right to be adopted. Here temporal things are kept in their due subordination; they are asked for in great moderation, as an acknowledgment of our dependence on the Giver. The request for the divine intercession we must of course offer for ourselves as the intercessor had not yet assumed his mediatorial office.

There is in this prayer a concatenation of the several clauses, what in human composition the critics call concealed method. The petitions rise out of each other. Every part also is, as it were, fenced round, the whole meeting in a circle; for the desire that God's name may be hallowed, His will be done, and His kingdom come, is referred to, and confirmed by the ascription at the close. If the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are His, then his ability to do and to give, are declared to be infinite.

But, as we have already observed, if we do not make our prayer the ground of our practice, if we do not pray as we believe, and act as we pray, we must not wonder if our petitions are not heard, and consequently not answered.

In the tremendous scene in the Apocalyptic vision, where the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened; the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books; were judged according—not to their prayers, but 'their works.' Surely then Christianity is a practical religion, and in order to use aright the prayer our Lord has given us, we must model our life by it as well as our petitions.

If we pray that the name of God may be hallowed, yet neglect to hallow it ourselves, by family as well as personal devotion, and a conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of public worship, we defeat the end of our praying, by falling short of its obligation.

The practical discrepancies between our prayers and our practice do not end here. How frequently are we solemnly imploring of God, that 'His kingdom may come,' while we are doing nothing to promote his kingdom of grace here, and consequently His kingdom of glory hereafter.

If we pray that God would 'give His Son the heathen for His inheritance,' and yet make it a matter of indifference, whether a vast proportion of the globe should live heathens or die Christians; if we pray that 'the knowledge of the Lord may cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea,' yet act as if we were indifferent whether Christianity ended as well as began at home. If we pray that 'the sound may go out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world,' and yet are satisfied to keep the sound within our own hearing, and the words within our own island, is not this a prayer which goeth out of feigned lips?

When we pray that 'His will may be done,' we know that His will is, that 'all should be saved, that not one should perish.' When, therefore, we assist in sending the Gospel to the dark and distant corners of the earth, then, and not till then, may we constantly desire of God in our prayers, that 'His saving health may be known to all nations.'

For we must vindicate the veracity of our prayer by our exertions, and extend its efficiency by our influence: if we contribute not to the accomplishment of the object for which we pray, what is this but mocking Omniscience, not by unmeaning, but unmeant petitions? If we do nothing we are inconsistent; but if we do worse than nothing, if we oppose, and by our opposition hinder the good which we do not think proper to support, may we not possibly bring on ourselves the appalling charge of being 'found fighting against God!'

It is indeed an easier and a cheaper way, to quiet the conscience by that common anodyne, 'that the heathen are very well as they are, that the morals of the Hindoos are not inferior to those of Christians.' With what sort of Christians these assertors of the rival innocence of Idolators associate, we will not pretend to determine.

But, allowing that we do not always send abroad the very best samples of Christianity, the very best representatives of its practical effects, allowing also that too many who remain at home, and who profess and call themselves Christians, are guilty of crimes which disgrace human nature, yet Christianity renounces them. Christian governments inflict on them capital punishments. Whil among these poor idola-

tors all these social duties are trampled on, all the suggestions of natural conscience are stifled, rites the most obscene, sacrifices the most bloody are offered; and these crimes are not only committed, but sanctioned, but enjoined; they do not violate religion, they make a part of it. Surely then, politically connected with them as we are, and yet contentedly to leave them in their degraded state of morals, without any attempt for their improvement, do we not by this neglect virtually pronounce, and awfully antieipate their dreadful sentence, 'let him that is unjust, be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.'

Again, it is an easier and a cheaper way to throw the weight off our own shoulders by the cool remark, 'that these things belong not to us, human efforts are superfluous; God must bring them about by a mircle.'—God, it is true, introduced Christianity by miracles, but He established it by means. Miracles, indeed, are His prerogative, but man is his instrument. Had He not sent His gospel and His ministers, it is probable that the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bythinia, and all proconsular Asia, had never heard of Christianity to this day, which is, indeed, still the case of too many parts of that region.

But is it not equally the effect of divine grace, I had almost said, is it not equally a miracle, when, in the hottest season of the most unrelenting warfare, in the most calamitous period of unusual scarcity, when Britain had the whole civilized world in arms against her, so that she could emphatically say, 'there is none that fighteth for us but only Thou O God—.' When it might seem business enough for any but Christians to take care of themselves, even then Britain raised the banner of the cross, not in the most unprofitable crusade for the most fruitless object, but that she might carry the knowledge of Him who suffered on it, to the ends of the habitable globe. Not to redeom His sepulchre from infidels, but to communicate to them the tidings of His resurrection, and of redemption through His blood. Is it not the effect of graee, and still more nearly approaching to a miracle when in a period immediately subsequent, while their fields were yet red with slaughter, and their rivers ran blood, their cities plundered, and their kingdoms desolated, God disposed the hearts of hostile sovereigns, ruling over opposing nations and the tenacious professors of different religions, yet as if actuated by one universal feeling, simultaneously to rise up in one common cause for the accomplishment of this mighty object—when the first use they made of the termination of war was to disseminate the gospel of peace; the first tribute they paid to the glory of God was to publish abroad that grand instrument of good will to men! Let us not then indulge groundless imaginations, as if miracles were wrought to justify indolence! as if a man were to be excused the trouble of being the active agent of Divine Providence.

The miracles wrought at Ephesus seem rather to have been intended as a confirmation of the truth of St. Paul's doctrine, than as the actual instrument of conversion. Many rejected the gospel who saw the miracles. The miracles wrought did not supersede the necessity of the apostle's 'speaking boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.' They did not supersede the necessity at another time, of his continuing to preach among them, for the space of two years, the two great doctrines of his mission, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Nor did they prevent his thinking it his bounden duty to send to the Ephesians his exquisite epistle, for the furtherance of their faith in the gospel. Here we behold the union of the Bible and the missionary—of the gospel sent and the gospel preached.

'Many,' says the sagacious bishop Butler 'think there is but one evil, and that evil is superstition; and we know that the epithets of superstitious and enthusiastic have been unsparingly lavished on the most sober and well digested plans for the dispersion of the scriptures abroad. We know that very trifling errors, errors inseparable from all great undertakings, every petty indiscretion, the inevitable consequence of employing a number of inferior agents, have been carefully collected, minutely set down in the note book of observation, and triumphantly produced as unanswerable objections to the whole plan. 'But,' says the profound prelate above-named, in his very able defence of missions, preached before the venerable society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts,* 'many well-disposed persons want much to be admonished what a dangerous thing it is to discountenance what is good, because it is not better, by raising objections to some under parts of it.'

The truth is, *they* are neither enthusiasts nor superstitious, who believe that well-concerted and prudently conducted societies for the promotion of this great object, acting with a deep sense of human imperfection, and in dependence upon the favour of God, will, in due time, with His blessing, without which nothing is strong, nothing is holy, accomplish the great end of bringing all the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdoms of the Redeemer. But *he* is the superstitious, he is the enthusiast, who indulges unfounded expectations, who looks for the fulfilment of declarations which have never been made, who depends upon miracles which have never been announced, who looks for consequences without their predisposing causes, who believes that the unassisted heathen, sunk in intellectual and spiritual darkness, shall call on Him of whom they have not heard, or that they shall hear without a preacher, or that the preacher will be found without being sent.

We might just as reasonably expect to see the beautiful imagery of Oriental metaphor, as displayed in the highly figurative language of the prophets, actually realized. We might as reasonably expect that the rose of Sharon shall literally blossom in the wilderness of Arabia, or the cedars of Lebanon spring up in the sandy vallies of Africa; that the thirsty desert should produce spontaneous springs of water; that the tame and savage animals should live together in friendly compact; that the material hills shall really sink and the vallies rise of themselves;

* Preached at their anniversary meeting, February 16th, 1738—9.

we might, I say, as rationally hope to see these lively illustrations of the fulfilment of the Divine promises literally verified, as to expect Christianity to make its own unassisted way into the distant and desolate corners of the earth. God has committed Christianity into the hands of Christians for universal diffusion.

Let it be observed, that it appears to be no real departure from the subject with which this chapter opened, that reference is not more frequently made in its progress to prayer. This seems to be the less necessary, as we are not reasoning with the irreligious man, but with the Christian, with him who professes to use the Lord's prayer as the pattern of his own devotions; and from the premises of that prayer, these observations are not forced interpretations, but natural deductions.

The Almighty is consistent in all his operations. They always exhibit simplicity and economy. He never works a superfluous miracle. There is also analogy in his works. Christ wrought miracles to relieve the bodily wants of the poor; he works miracles for them no longer, he turns them over to the rich. He wrought miracles on the first conversion of the heathen; He works miracles for them no longer, he now turns them over to Christians. He resigns to human agency, under his blessing, to provide for the spiritual wants of the ignorant, as well as for the temporal wants of the indigent. Christianity and riches are deposited in the hands of Christians, for the more general dispersion of both to the respectively destitute.

And when, if ever, through the unmerited mercy of God, that glorious and devoutly desired day shall arrive, which warms the heart even in the distant perspective of prophecy, when nation shall no more rise against nation, and they shall learn war no more; what is so likely to hasten that triumphant period, what is so likely to turn the sword into a pruning-hook, and to establish lasting peace throughout the world, as that spirit of love and concord which the universal diffusion of gospel light is calculated to impart? What is so likely to produce charity among all the children of the same common Father, as when subjects as well as sovereigns, shall be brought to know God, from the greatest to the least.

Those admirable institutions, whose object it is to lead to this blessed consummation, have already enlarged the borders of Christian charity to an almost indefinite extent, by bringing into contact from every point of the compass, and from almost every city in the civilized world, Christians, who had not so much as heard of each others existence; it has already shown them that whatever difference of education and of government, whatever modifications of opinion had hitherto divided them, the great fundamental principles of love to God, of faith in his Son, and charity to the souls of men, are at length beginning to draw them into a nearer connexion. These general principles of agreement, are already bringing into one point of union, persons whom difference of sentiment had kept asunder as widely as seas had separated, and are the only means, as far as human penetration can foresee, of drawing the cords of amity into still closer bonds.

Already, even in the early stage of this vast enterprize, may we not perceive that it has had a considerable share in promoting mutual good will, reciprocal kindness, and growing confidence, and this with foreigners, who, though they had subdued their enmity, might not so soon have conquered their jealousy? Has it not a powerful tendency to cure any remaining distrust, to confirm good faith, to promote confidence and attachment between nations, whose respect was not perhaps, altogether untinctured with suspicion? May it not break down the wall of partition, which has so long kept us asunder? May it not bring those who were aforetime separated in heart as well as country, to unite in Christian brotherhood, till we become at length of one mind in doctrine, as we already are in regard to this institution. May not the probable results of this Christian confederacy become a ratification between monarchs, firmer than any political compact, stronger than any diplomatic convention? For is it not an instrument of confederation of which the GREAT SEAL IS THE WORD OF GOD? Does it not embrace the two sublime objects of the angelic hosts, by uniting 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men?' For what means, we repeat, are so likely to bring churches, who have been hitherto kept in spiritual darkness, to a gradual and devoutly desired reformation, as to disperse that darkness, as our being the honoured instruments of causing the full beams of divine truth to shine more directly upon them?

To descend to the very minutest wheels of this mighty engine; with whatever derision that which has been denominated popular charity may have been treated; its inferior divisions have this advantage, that they set in motion the young and the poor. To the young female of fortune, this subordinate part of the great whole, furnishes a kind of novitiate to her future and more extended sphere of charity, for the details of which this sex has the most leisure. To the poor, like the admirable institutions of the Savings Bank, though for different purposes, it gives them a little and a safe lift in the scale of society. For will they not be less likely to follow in the turbulent train of the seditious demagogue, less disposed by his pernicious but persuasive outcry, to give their stated penny for the promotion of riot and the maintenance of rioters, when that penny has been pre-engaged for the circulation of that Volume, which forbids them to speak evil of dignities, which commands to avoid those who are given to change; to work, to be quiet, to mind their own business; which imperatively says, 'I exhort that prayers and intercessions be made for kings and all in authority;' and above all, will not the Bible be the surest antidote against the infection of the poison contained in that profusion of books, pamphlets, and placards, which, without such a specific threatens both our moral and political destruction.

It is the nature of man to delight in party, he delights to belong to something, to hold to his fellow-creatures, though by the least and lowest

link in the chain of society; let us then take advantage of this his natural weakness. For is it not better to attach him to something that is useful to himself and to others, that he may be less likely to be drawn into such schemes as are destructive of his temporal, as well as of his own highest interests, and dangerous to the security of the state, and of the country. To be connected, though by the lowest and slighest tie, with his superiors, is to the poor man at once an encouragement and a security. To belong to societies of which princes are the patrons, is at once a gratification and a guard; for will not this connexion, remote as it may seem, confirm his abhorrence of those revolutionary societies whose aim is the overthrow of princes?

Let us not then grudge to the poor who have so few pleasures, that pure, and to them that hitherto untasted pleasure, that almost sacred feeling, how much more blessed is it to give than to receive. Let us not deny them the gratification of being humble contributors towards conveying that word of life to others, by which their own souls have been benefited; and to which they are indebted for the knowledge, that it is the duty of Christians to teach others what themselves have been gratuitously taught.

It is, however, most important to recommend that the petty contributions of the poor should never be extorted, nor even wrung from them by undue influence. It must be a willing offering, not pinched from their necessities, but cheerfully accepted, as the thankful tribute of successful industry. With respect to such as are in distress, and especially in debt, it would neither be honest in themselves to give, nor in the collector to receive. A very few indiscretions of this kind have given too inviting a handle, which has been unfairly laid hold of to bring the plan itself into discredit.

To venture one more passage from the prelate already quoted—and who will accuse Bishop Butler of enthusiasm?—'If the gospel had its proper influence in the Christian world in general, as this country is the centre of trade, and the seat of learning, a very few years, in all probability, would settle Christianity in every country in the world *without miraculous assistance.*'

If we, then, in this highly favoured land, are blessed with the volume of Divine Revelation, let us impart it to others with the greater alacrity, from the humiliating recollection that it was no merit of our own which brought the news of eternal life to an island of barbarians and idolaters. Freely we have received, freely let us give.

The sun of righteousness which first arose in the east, rejoicing as a giant to run his course, has travelled in the greatness of his strength, till having made the circuit of the globe, having illuminated the western world, he is once again rising to shed the glories of his orient beams, where they first dawned.

> 'So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed,
> And yet again repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.'

Let Commerce, then, wherever she spreads her sails, be assured that whether she carries the wealth of Ormus, or of Ind, barbaric pearl and gold from the East; or from the West, the mines of Potosi or Peru, the most precious merchandize with which her vessels can be freighted, is that pearl of great price which the merchantman in the Gospel sold all that he had to purchase.

Let Discovery, wherever she pushes her bold and perilous adventure, wherever she lights on an inhabited nook of land, even should she succeed in exploring the secrets of the polar world, let her be assured that all the wonders for which gaping curiosity impatiently waits, are not to be compared with the wonders contained in that Gospel, which, it is to be hoped, she will make part of her provision for the voyage. Let her be assured, that if she carries the Bible, she will, at return, bring back no news of equal value with that she carries out; will bring back to her native home no tidings of equal joy to the glad tidings of the Gospel she has carried abroad.

Let Conquest, though her garments have been rolled in blood, make the vanquished the only reparation in her power, not merely like the conquering Cæsar and Alexander, by carrying civilization in her train, but Christianity; by carrying them this charter of our own immortal hopes. If this mighty boon will not fully expiate the offences of the injurer, it will more than mitigate, it will even more than repay the wrongs of the injured.

Conclusion.

'I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh unto me,' says the Almighty by his Prophet. We must, therefore, when we approach him in our devotions, frequently endeavour to warm our hearts, raise our views, and quicken our aspirations with a recollection of His glorious attributes,—of that Omnipotence which can give to all without the least deduction from any, or from Himself; of that ubiquity which renders Him the constant witness of our actions; of that Omniscience which makes him a discerner of our intentions, and which penetrates the most secret disguises of our inmost souls; of that perfect holiness, which should at once be the object of our adoration, and the model of our practice; of that truth, which will never forfeit any of His promises; of that faithfulness, which will never forsake any that trust in Him; of that love, which our innumerable offences cannot exhaust; of that eternity which had place 'before the mountains were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting He is God;' of that grandeur which has set his glory above the heavens; of that long suffering of God, who is strong and patient, and who is provoked every day; of that justice which will by no means clear the guilty, yet of that mercy which forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin; of that compassion which waits to be gracious; of that goodness which leadeth to repentance; of that purity, which, while it hates sin, invites the sinner to return.

All these attributes are his in the abstract.

He is not only strong, but our strength, not only the giver of life, but life itself, he not only bestows, but *is* salvation, he not only teaches truth, but *is* truth, he not only shows the way to heaven, but *is* the way, not only communicates light, but *is* light.

When we reflect that even His incommunicable attributes are employed, in never-ceasing exercise for the common benefit and happiness of mankind, adoration is melted into gratitude. When we consider, that even His justice, that flaming sword which threatened our eternal exclusion from Paradise, the attribute at which the best may tremble, for who is he that lives and sins not, is turned in our favour by the great propitiation made for sin; that heart must be hard, indeed, which is not softened into love. It is because we are so little accustomed to indulge these reflections, that our natural hardness acquires additional obduracy.

Whatever good there is even in the renewed man, is but a faint adumbration of the perfections of God. The best created things, light itself, lose all their brightness when compared with the uncreated glory from which all they have is borrowed. The heavens are not pure in His sight, behold the moon and it shineth not. He chargeth His angels with folly. The sublimest intellectual intelligences, and the brightest visible operations of His power, are swallowed up in the contemplation of His underived original perfection. The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man, and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of man.

Yet though the highest conceivable created excellence is thrown into utter darkness, in the comparison with this surpassing splendour, yet these remote resemblances serve to convey some idea, but Oh how weak! some reminding, but Oh how inadequate! some conception, but Oh how faint! of the Divine perfections.

Hence in the highest qualities of the best Christian we have a hint, a rudiment which serves to recal to our mind the Divine excellence, of which they are an emanation.—We use it, not as a means of overvaluing the creature, but of raising our adoration of the infinite, inexhaustible, overflowing fountain of natural, intellectual, and spiritual good. Thus, though we cannot 'search out the Almighty to perfection;' yet these faint traces, are constant intimations to us to imitate, in our low measure and degree, all the imitable attributes of Almighty goodness.—He would never have said, 'be ye holy as I am holy,' if holiness had been absolutely unattainable. There must be an aim, however low, at this conformity to our divine pattern.

The life which the Lord of glory condescended to lead on earth, has introduced us to the nearest possible view of the Divine perfections, and exhibited a clearer prospect of the possibility of a closer imitation of them, than could have been conveyed to us by any other means. His actions are not merely objects of human admiration. They all, with the exception of his miracles, imperatively demand to be imitated, as well as admired. His meekness under reproaches the most contumelious; His patience under sufferings the most exquisite; His combination of active beneficence with unremitting devotion,—for, after days spent in successive acts of charity, He continued all night in prayer to God; His union of constant self-denial, with unwearied bounty; His enduring hunger, who could have relieved it by one of those miracles, so often performed for the relief of others; his compassion for sinners joined with His hatred of sin; His supplication for His enemies, extenuating their guilt by pleading their ignorance. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

If this religion be not practical, if this practice be not a pattern for our's, we know not what is. While we obey him then in praying for our fellow-creatures, let us remember that we must imitate his Divine philanthropy in assisting them; while we rank ourselves among his admirers by praising his excellences, let us remember we shall only be known to be his disciples when we love one another.

If good works then be indispensable, and Faith be their great influencing principle, both must be kept alive, and kept in exercise by the aliment of prayer. Prayer is the chain of communication with God himself.—The readiest way to be assimilated to his likeness, the best means of promoting our conformity to His will, of advancing our love to Him and to each other. If we neglect prayer, we rob our souls of the prescribed means of our serving him here, and of the fairest foretaste of that communion with Him, which will be our highest happiness hereafter.

The obedience of the heart which grows out of a sound faith, rooted good desires, well-weighed resolutions of fidelity, formed in a higher strength than our own; a belief in the sacred Scriptures so confirmed as not to be shaken by any objections brought against them, by any difficulties to be found in them; the comparing faithfully all we have heard urged against Religion, with all we have seen of its effects, and experienced of its benefits, all this is the solid ground on which future attainments must hereafter be built, a ground to be tried by prayer in the enquiring mind and the seeking heart.

And when our reason is become as strong on the side of Christianity as our belief—when our faith is as enlightened as it is implicit—when the growth of the one only confirms the dominion of the other, this is such an obedience of the heart as will infallibly produce obedience in the life; an obedience which will be both the cause and the consequence of effectual prayer.

The renewing of the soul after the image of God is not otherwise to be obtained than by true spiritual heart-searching prayer. There may be a form of unfelt petitions, a ceremonious avowal of faith, a customary profession of repentance, a general acknowledgment of sin, uttered from the lips to God; but where is His image and superscription written upon the heart? Where is the transforming power of Religion in the life? Where is the living transcript of the Divine original? Where is that holiness to which the vision of the Lord is specifically promised? Where is the light, and life, and grace of the Redeemer exhibited in the temper and

conduct? Yet we are assured, that if we are Christians, there must be an aim at this conformity.

As for the genuine Christian, however weak in faith and defective in obedience, yet he is still seeking, though with slow and faultering steps, the things which are above; he is still striving, though with unequal progress, for the prize of his high calling; he is still looking, though with a dim and feeble eye, for glory, honour, and immortality; He is still waiting, though not with a trust so lively as to annihilate the distance,—to see his eternal redemption drawing nigh.—Though his aims will always be far greater than his attainments, yet he is not discouraged; his hope is above, his heart is above, his treasure is above; no wonder then that his prayers are directed, and a large portion of his wealth sent forward thither, where he himself hopes soon to be. It is but transmitting his riches of both kinds, not only to his future, but his eternal home.

Even if prayer were as worthless, with respect to present advantages, and religion as burthensome as some suppose, it would be a sufficient vindication of both that they lead to eternal bliss. When by a distant journey, we have been long separated from our own beloved habitation, we do not call that the most desirable road back to it which abounds with the gayest objects, but that which will bring us the most safely home. If, indeed, we can amuse ourselves with the scenery, without slackening our pace, or diverging from our path, it is well. It is no offence against the law of love, if we catch in passing, such innocent and safe delights as his bounty has scattered in our path. And if our journey have so many refreshments showered down by the hand of Divine beneficence, what shall be the delights of our home?

If the heavens grow black with clouds, and storms arise, these only serve to quicken our pace, and make us avoid digression. If sickness or accident befal us, our heart is still cheered with the thought that we are nearer home—the future supports us under the present; a little further say we—a little more fatigue, and we shall see the desire of our heart. If we are bent on security rather than amusement, the straightest and the safest way will determine our choice. Heaven is worth more sacrifices of pleasure and of profit than those to which a religious life may subject us; though, after all, it often calls for fewer and lighter than a worldly one imposes. But if it were as rough and thorny as those who have never tried it believe, it would be a sufficient apology for voluntarily encountering its hardships, that it is the only road to heaven.

When the prosperous fool says, 'soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,'—the prosperous Christian says, 'soul tremble at thine ease—be on thy guard.—Thou hast, indeed, much goods laid up for thee, but it is in a future world. Lose not a large inheritance for a paltry possession; forfeit not an unalienable reversion for a life interest,—a life which this very night may be required of thee.'

Perhaps even the worldly and thoughtless man, under an occasional fit of dejection, or an accidental disappointment, may be brought to say, 'When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God.'—Oh, think upon Him now, now, when you are in prosperity, now, when your fortunes are flourishing, now when your hill is so strong that you think it shall never be moved—think upon Him when the scene is the brightest, when the world courts, flatteries mislead, and pleasures betray you; think on Him while you are able to think at all, while you possess the capacity of thinking. The time may come, when, 'He may turn his face from you, and you will be troubled.' Think of God when the alluring images of pleasure and of profit would seduce you from him. Prosperity is the season of peculiar peril. 'It is the bright day that bringeth forth the adder.' Think of God when the tempting world says, 'All this will I give thee. Trust not the insolvent world, it has cheated every creditor that ever trusted. It will cheat you.

To those who are yet halting between two opinions, or rather between an opinion and an inclination, to those who approve the right, but pursue the wrong, those who are not without convictions, but which convictions pleasure stifles, or business overrules, those who are balancing between the world and Him who made it, who resolve to reform, but make the resolution a substitute for the performance; and oh how large, and in many points how respectable a class this is!—to these, to the doubting, and the dilatory, we would take the liberty to speak plainly.

It is much to be feared, that secret, unconscious infidelity lies at the bottom of the little progress you make in your spiritual attainments. If the truth, certainty, and inconceivable importance of eternal things were once rooted and grounded in the heart, it would infallibly quicken both devotion and practice. We know, but we do not act upon the knowledge, that our great business in this world is to determine our choice for eternity. This is not a bye work, which may be deferred to any time at the hazard of its not being done at all; it is the imperious business of the present hour, the next may not be granted us. It is not an affair to be kept in reserve, an affair to be postponed till other affairs are settled, for how many souls has this dilatory delusion ruined!

The resolution you may make at this moment, and the practical effect of this resolution may determine your fate for ever. The decision, if delayed, may never be made; the call, now given, may never be repeated. Think what you put to hazard by delay.—There is not an hour in our lives on which eternal life, or eternal death may not depend. Shall we then, for a single moment, make it a matter of debate what our everlasting condition shall be? If it were a decision between two temporal concerns which you were called upon to make, deliberation might be wisdom, because there might be degrees of comparison between their value, and consequently a doubt as to the predominance of the object, and the prudence of your choice. But the inequalities of created things are levelled when brought into comparison with the things of eternity—the difference of more or less, richer or poorer, prosperity or privation,

no longer exists; the distinction is swallowed up when contemplated in the view of endless happiness or endless misery. Here then, if you hesitate, you have already taken your part; irresolution is decision; deliberation is destruction; you have already resolved.

The hand which now holds the pen dares not denounce anathemas, but trembles as it transcribes the divinely inspired denunciation of the prophet Zephaniah. 'The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, it hasteth greatly; it is the voice of the day of the Lord, when the mighty man shall cry bitterly. That day is a day of wrath; a day of trouble and distress; a day of wasteness and desolation; a day of darkness and gloominess; a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm!'

The awful ruins of imperial Rome, the still more defaced vestiges of learned Athens, present a deeply touching spectacle of departed glory. Still more affecting is it to contemplate in the study of history on the destruction of Carthage, of Babylon, of Memphis, whose very ruins are no longer to be found! How affecting to meditate on ancient Troy, whose very scite can no longer be determined! Yet here no wonder mixes with our solemn feeling. All these noble monuments of human grandeur were made of destructible materials, they could not, from their very nature, last for ever.—But, to a deeply reflecting mind, what is the ruin of temples, towers, palaces, and cities, what is the ruin of 'the great globe itself' compared with the destruction of one soul meant for immortality—a soul furnished by its bountiful Creator with all the means for its instruction, sanctification, redemption, and eternal bliss? And what presents the most mournful picture to us, and is in itself the most dreadful aggravation, is that its consciousness cannot be extinguished; the thought of what he might have been will magnify the misery of what he is—a reflection which will accompany and torment tho inextinguishable memory through a miserable eternity. Whether in the instance of the rich man, who 'in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torment,' we might dare believe that some remains of human tenderness for his relatives might survive in a ruined soul; or, whether his anguish was made more bitter, from the reflection, that he had been their corrupter, and therefore dreaded that their punishment might hereafter aggravate his own, we pretend not to say. In any event, it offers a lesson pregnant with instruction. It admonishes every impenitent offender, of the dreadful addition that may be made to his own misery, by that corrupt example which has ruined others. And it will be the consummation of his calamity that he can see nothing but justice in his condemnation.—For it is worth observing, that the man in the parable brings no accusation against the equity of his sentence. Thus shall every condemned sinner 'justify God in his saying, and clear him when he is judged.'

But though the anguish of an undone futurity, and the specific nature of the punishment, are exhibited with awful clearness and explicit exactness, in the gospel; how wisely has the Holy Spirit who dictated it, avoided all particulars of that heavenly happiness which we are yet assured will be without measure and without end, whilst the Elysian groves of the Pagan, and the paradise of the Mahometan have been graphically represented, the former by their poets, the latter in their religious code. The one describes the inhabitants reposing in gloomy bowers in cheerless indolence, with the alternative of a restless activity exercised in contemptible pursuits, and renewing on inferior objects the busy feats in which they had delighted here below! The heroes who during life had slaughtered mon, make war on beasts! The mighty warriors, who had made the earth to tremble, con descend in heaven to tame horses! The departed Mussulman receives *his* celestial rewards in scenes of revelry and banquets of voluptuousness! What gratifications for an immaterial, immortal spirit!

The whole scheme of future happiness exhibited in these two systems, is a preposterous provision for the perishable part of man, to the entire exclusion of the immortal principle; both schemes stand in direct opposition to the laws of infinite wisdom, and the express word of Scripture. Both intimate as if the body were the part of our nature which is to exist after death, while the soul is the portion which is to be extinguished. Of a spiritual heaven, neither the obsolete mythology, nor the existing Koran, affords the slightest information.

The Scripture views of heaven are given rather to quicken faith than to gratify curiosity. There the appropriate promises to spiritual beings are purely spiritual. It is enough for believers to know that they shall be for ever with the Lord; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him. In the vision of the Supreme Good, there must be supreme felicity. Our capacities of knowledge and happiness shall be commensurate with our duration. On earth, part of our enjoyment—a most fallacious part—consists in framing new objects for our wishes; in heaven there shall remain in us no such disquieting desires, for all which *can* be found we shall find in God. We shall not know our Redeemer by the hearing of the ear, but we shall see Him as he is; our knowledge, therefore, will be clear, because it will be intuitive.

It is a glorious part of the promised bliss, that the book of prophecy shall be realized; the book of providence displayed, every mysterious dispensation unfolded, not by conjecture, but by vision. In the grand general view of Revelation, minute description would be below our ideas; circumstantial details would be disparaging; they would debase what they pretend to exalt. We cannot conceive the blessings prepared for us, until he who has prepared reveal them.

If, indeed, the blessedness of the eternal world could be described, new faculties must be given us to comprehend it. If it could be conceived, its glories would be lowered, and our admiring wonder diminished. The wealth that can be counted has bounds; the blessings that can be calculated have limits. We now rejoice in the expectation of happiness inconceivable. To have conveyed it to our full apprehension, our con

ceptions of it must then be taken from something with which we are already acquainted, and we should be sure to depreciate the value of things unseen, by a comparison with even the best of the things which are seen. In short, if the state of heaven were attempted to be let down to human intelligence, it would be far inferior to the glorious but indistinct glimpses which we now catch from the oracles of God, of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. What Christian does not exult in that grand outline of unknown, unimagined, yet consummate bliss —In THY presence is the fulness of joy, and at *Thy* right hand are pleasures for evermore?

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

SELECTED AND COMPILED BY THE AUTHOR, FROM VARIOUS PORTIONS OF HER WORKS EXCLUSIVELY ON THAT SUBJECT.

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle."

"I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." 2 Peter, c. i.

PREFACE.

FROM a sick, and, in all human probability, a dying bed, the writer of these pages feels an earnest desire to be enabled, with the blessing of God, to execute a little plan which has at different times crossed her mind, but which she never found leisure to accomplish, till the present season of incapacity.

"The importunity of friends,"—that hackneyed apology for works of inferior merit, is not, in the present instance, the less true for being worn threadbare. By many partial friends she has frequently been desired to write a volume exclusively on Prayer. With this request she has always declined complying; because, among other reasons, she was aware that she had previously exhausted—not the subject itself, which is indeed inexhaustible,—but the slender resources of her own mind.

In her, perhaps too numerous, printed works, written on different subjects, and at distant periods, there are very many volumes, in which not only some reference has been made, but some distinct portions assigned, to the all-important subject of Prayer.

It is now her latest and warmest wish to be permitted to collect and examine some of those portions which treat more directly of this great duty; to unite the scattered members into one compact body, and to bring each under its proper head, into one point of view. All she is herself able to do, is to hear these extracts read by kind friends, and to adopt such passages as she may think proper for selection.

Perhaps the silence and solitude of her present nightly watchings may, through Divine grace, impress her own heart with a still deeper sense of the unspeakable importance and value of Prayer, and of the support and consolation which may be granted in answer to this exercise, when every other support and consolation must inevitably fail.

However small may be the use of this compilation to the reader, the writer at least is already reaping one benefit herself from what she has presumed to suggest to others,—the benefit of feeling, as she reviews these pages, how sadly she herself has fallen short in the duties she has so repeatedly recommended. In this re-examination she has sensibly felt how easy it is to be good upon paper, and how difficult in practice.

At the same time she humbly trusts that her very failures may have enabled her to touch these subjects more experimentally than she might have done had her own deficiencies been less powerfully recollected, and less acutely felt.

The Author ventures to hope that her valued friends, to whom this selection is more especially dedicated, will consider it as the last bequest of one, who, about to quit this transitory scene, and feeling the deepest interest in their spiritual prosperity, as also for that of all her fellow Christians, is desirous, by this her final act, to testify at least her affectionate anxiety for their eternal happiness.

The present weak state of the Author must apologize for inaccuracies and repetitions.

Barley-Wood.

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

CHAP. I.

The necessity of Prayer founded on the corruption of human nature.

THE subject of man's apostacy is so nearly connected with the subject of Prayer, being indeed that which constitutes the necessity of this duty, that some mention of the one ought to precede any discussion of the other. Let, then, the conviction that we have fallen from our original

state, and that this lapse presents the most powerful incentive to prayer, furnish an apology for making a few preliminary remarks on this great article of our faith.

The doctrine is not the less a fundamental doctrine, because it has been abused to the worst purposes; some having erroneously considered it as leaving us without hope, and others as lending an excuse to unresisted sin.—It is a doctrine which meets us in one unbroken series throughout the whole sacred volume; we find it from the third of Genesis, which records the event of man's apostacy, carried on through the history of its fatal consequences in all the subsequent instances of sin, individual and national, and running in one continued stream from the first sad tale of woe, to the close of the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic Vision.

And, to remove the groundless hope, that this quality of inherent corruption belonged only to the profligate and abandoned, the Divine Inspirer of the sacred writers took especial care, that they should not confine themselves to relate the sins of these alone.

Why are the errors, the weaknesses, and even the crimes of the best of men recorded with equal fidelity? Why are we told of the twice repeated deceit of the father of the faithful? Why of the single instance of vanity in Hezekiah? Why of the too impetuous zeal of Elijah? Why of the error of the almost perfect Moses? Why of the insincerity of Jacob? Why of the far darker crimes of the otherwise holy David? Why of the departure of the wisest of men from that piety displayed with sublimity unparalleled in the dedication of the Temple? Why seems it to have been invariably studied, to record with more minute detail the vices and errors of these eminent men, than even those of the successive impious kings of Israel, and of Judah; while these last are generally dismissed with the brief, but melancholy sentence, that they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; followed only by too frequent an intimation that they made way for a successor worse than themselves? The answer is, that the truth of our universal lapse could only be proved by transmitting the record of those vices, from which even the holiest men were not exempt.

Had the Holy Scriptures kept back from man the faithful delineations of the illustrious characters to which we have referred, the truth of the doctrine in question, though occasionally felt, and in spite of his resistance, forced upon him, would not have been believed; or, if believed, would not have been acknowledged.

Christianity hangs on a few plain truths; 'that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all that seek him;' that man has apostatised from his original character, and by it has forfeited his original destination: that Christ came into this world and died upon the cross to expiate sin, and to save sinners; that after his ascension into Heaven, he did not leave his work imperfect. He sent his Holy Spirit, who performed his first office by giving to the Apostles miraculous powers. His offices did not cease there; he has indeed withdrawn his miraculous gifts, but he still continues his silent but powerful operations, and that in their due order;—first, that of convincing of sin, and of changing the heart of the sinner, before he assumes the gracious character of the Comforter. What need, then, of heresies to perplex doctrines, or of philosophy to entangle, or of will-worshippers to multiply them?

We do not deny that there are, in Christianity, high and holy mysteries; but these 'secret things,' though they 'belong to God,' have their practical uses for us; they teach us humility, the prime Christian grace; thy send us to prayer, and they exercise faith, the parent attribute of all other graces.

This religion of facts, then, the poorest listeners in the aisles of our churches understand sufficiently, to be made by it wise unto salvation. They are saved by a practical belief of a few simple but inestimable truths.

By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved; not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not a 'philosophy, falsely so called;' nor their science, 'a science of opposition;' but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus. Had there been any other way but the cross by which sinners could be saved, they, perhaps of all men were best qualified to have found it.

To return, then, to the particular doctrine under consideration:—Let us believe man is corrupt, because the Bible tells us he is so. Let us believe that all were so by nature, even the best, since we learn it from Divine authority. Let us, from the same authority, trace the disorder to its source from a fallen parent, its seat in a corrupt heart, its extent through the whole man, its universality over the entire race.

All are willing to allow that we are subject to frailties, to imperfections, to infirmities; facts compel us to confess a propensity to crimes, but worldly men confine the commission of them to the vulgar. But to rest here would lead us to a very false estimate of the doctrine in question, contrary to the decisive language of Scripture; it would establish corruption to be an accident, and not a root. It would by a division of offenders into two classes, deny that all offences are derived from one common principle.

If, then, men would examine their own bosoms as closely as they censure the faults of others loudly, we should all find there the incipient stirrings of many a sin, which, when brought into action by circumstances, produce consequences the most appalling. Let us then bless God, not that we are better than other men, but that we are placed by Providence out of the reach of being goaded by that temptation, stimulated by that poverty, which, had they been our lot, might have led to the same termination.

Let, then, the fear of God, the knowledge of His Word, and the knowledge of ourselves, teach us, that there is not, by nature, so wide a difference between ourselves and others as we

fondly imagine; that there is not by nature, a great gulf fixed, that they who are on this side might not pass over to the other. Let us not look to any superior virtue, to any native strength of our own, but let us look with a lively gratitude to that mercy of God which has preserved us from the temptations to which they have yielded. But, above all, let us look to that preventing and restraining grace which is withheld from none who ask it: without this all-powerful grace, Latimer might have led Bonner to the stake; with it Bonner might have ascended the scaffold a martyr to true religion. Without this grace, Luther might have fattened on the sale of indulgences; and with it Leo the Tenth might have accomplished the blessed work of Reformation.

CHAP. II.

The duty of Prayer inferred from the helplessness of man.

'Man is not only a sinful, he is also a helpless, and therefore a dependent being. This offers new and powerful motives for the necessity of prayer, the necessity of looking continually to a higher power, to a better strength than our own. If that Power sustain us not, we fall, if he direct us not, we wander. His guidance is not only perfect freedom, but perfect safety. Our greatest danger begins from the moment we imagine we are able to go alone.

The self-sufficiency of man arising from his imaginary dignity, is a favourite doctrine with the nominal Christian. He feeds his pride with this pernicious aliment. And, as we hear much, so we hear falsely, of the dignity of human nature. Prayer, founded on the true principles of Scripture, alone teaches us wherein our true dignity consists. The dignity of a fallen creature is a perfect anomaly. True dignity, contrary to the common opinion, that it is an inherent excellence, is actually a sense of the want of it; it consists not in our valuing ourselves, but in a continual feeling of our dependence upon God, and an unceasing aim at conformity to his image.

Nothing but a humbling sense of the sinfulness of our nature, of our practised offences, of our utter helplessness, and constant dependence, can bring us to fervent and persevering prayer. How did the faith of the saints of old flourish under a darker dispensation, through all the clouds and ignorance which obscured their views of God! 'They looked unto Him, and were enlightened!' How do their slender means and high attainments reproach us!

David found that the strength and spirit of nature which had enabled him to resist the lion and the bear, did not enable him to resist his outward temptations, nor to conquer his inward corruptions. He therefore prayed, not only for deliverance 'from blood-guiltiness,' for a grievously remembered sin, he prayed for the *principle* of piety, for the *fountain* of holiness, for 'the creation of a clean heart,' for 'the renewing of a right spirit,' for 'truth in the inward parts,' that the 'comfort of God's help might be granted him.' This uniform avowal of the secret workings of sin, this uniform dependence on the mercy of God to pardon, and the grace of God to assist, render his precatory addresses, though they are those of a sovereign and a warrior, so universally applicable to the case of every private Christian.

One of our best poets,—himself an unsuccessful courtier,—from a personal experience of the mortifying feelings of abject solicitation, has said, that if there were the man in the world whom he was at liberty to hate, he would wish him no greater punishment than *attendance and dependence*. But he applies the heavy penalty of this wish to the dependants on *mortal* greatness.

Now, attendance and dependence are the very essence both of the safety and happiness of a Christian. Dependence on God is his only true liberty, as attendance on Him is his only true consolation. The suitor for human favour is liable to continual disappointment; if he knock at the door of his patron, there is probably a general order not to admit him. In the higher case, there is a special promise, that 'to him that knocks it shall be opened.' The human patron hates importunity; the Heavenly Patron invites it. The one receives his suitor according to his humour, or refuses his admission from the caprice of the moment; with the other, 'there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.' 'Come unto me,' is His uniform invitation. The Almighty Donor never puts off His humble petitioner to a more convenient season. *His* Court of Requests is always open. He receives the petition as soon as it is offered; He grants it as soon as it is made; and though he will not dispense with a continuance of the application, yet to every fresh application He promises fresh support. He will still be solicited, but it is in order that he may still bestow. Repeated gifts do not exhaust His bounty, nor lessen His power of fulfilment. Repeated solicitation, so far from wearing His patience, is an additional call for His favour.

Nor is the lateness of the petition any bar to its acceptance; He likes it should be early, but He rejects it not though it be late.

And as past mercies on God's part, so, to the praise of his grace be it said, that past offences on our own part are no hindrance to the application of hearty repentance, or the answer of fervent prayer.

The man in power has many claimants on his favour, and comparatively few boons to bestow. The God of Power has all things in His gift, and only blames the solicitor for coming so seldom, or coming so late, or staying so little a while. He only wishes that his best gifts were more earnestly sought.

When we solicit an earthly benefactor, it is often upon the strength of some pretence to his favour,—the hope of some reward for past services: even if we can produce little claim, we insinuate something like merit. But when we approach our Heavenly Benefactor, so far from having any thing like claim, any thing like merit, to produce, our only true, and our only acceptable plea, is our utter want both of claim

and merit,—is the utter destitution of all that can recommend us; yet we presume to ask favour, when we deserve nothing but rejection, we are encouraged to ask for eternal happiness, when we deserve only eternal punishment. Though we have nothing to produce but disloyalty, we ask for the privileges of subjects; though nothing but disobedience to offer, we plead the privileges of children,—we implore the tenderness of a father.

The petitioner to human power who may formerly have offended his benefactor, contrives to soften his displeasure by representing that the offence was a small one. The devout petitioner to God uses no such subterfuge. In the boldness of faith, and the humility of repentance, he cries, 'Pardon my iniquity, for it is *great*.'

He who does not believe this fundamental truth, 'the helplessness of man,' on which the other doctrines of the Bible are built,—even he who does nominally profess to assent to it as a doctrine of Scripture; yet, if he does not experimentally acknowledge it; if he does not feel it in the convictions of his own awakened conscience, in his discovery of the evil workings of his own heart, and the wrong propensities of his own nature, all bearing their testimony to its truth,—such a one will not pray earnestly for its cure,—will not pray with that feeling of his helplessness, with that sense of dependence on Divine assistance, which alone makes prayer efficacious.

Of this corruption he can never attain an adequate conception, till his progress in religion has opened his eyes on what is the natural state of man. Till this was the case, he himself was as far from desiring the change as he was from believing it necessary. He does not even suspect its existence, till he is in some measure delivered from its dominion.

Nothing will make us truly humble, nothing will make us constantly vigilant, nothing will entirely lead us to have recourse to prayer, so fervently or so frequently, as this ever-abiding sense of our corrupt and helpless nature, as our not being able to ascribe any disposition in ourselves to any thing that is good, or any power to avoid, by our own strength, any thing that is evil.

CHAP. III.

Prayer. Its Definition.

Prayer is the application of want to Him who alone can relieve it, the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty, the prostration of humility, the fervency of penitence, the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness; not figures of speech, but compunctions of soul. It is the 'Lord save us, we perish,' of drowning Peter; the cry of faith to the ear of mercy.

Adoration is the noblest employment of created beings; confession, the natural language of guilty creatures; praise, the spontaneous expression of pardoned sinners.—Prayer is desire; the abasement of contrition; the energy of gratitude. It is not a mere conception of the mind nor an effort of the intellect, nor an act of the memory; but an elevation of the soul towards its Maker. It is the devout breathing of a creature struck with a sense of its own misery, and of the infinite holiness of Him whom it is addressing, experimentally convinced of its own emptiness, and of the abundant fulness of God, of his readiness to hear, of his power to help, of his willingness to save. It is not an emotion produced in the senses, nor an effect wrought by the imagination; but a determination of the will, an effusion of the heart.

Prayer is the guide to self-knowledge, by prompting us to look after our sins, in order to pray against them; it is a motive to vigilance, by teaching us to guard against those sins which, through self-examination, we have been enabled to detect.

Prayer is an act both of the understanding and of the heart. The understanding must apply itself to the knowledge of the Divine perfections, or the heart will not be led to the adoration of them. It would not be a *reasonable* service if the mind was excluded. It must be rational worship, or the human worshipper would not bring to the service the distinguishing faculty of his nature, which is reason. It must be spiritual worship, or it would want the distinctive quality to make it acceptable to Him who is a spirit, and who has declared that he will be worshipped 'in spirit and in truth.'

Prayer is right in itself as the most powerful means of resisting sin and advancing in holiness. It is above all right, as every thing is which has the authority of Scripture, the command of God, and the example of Christ.

There is a perfect consistency in all the ordinations of God; a perfect congruity in the whole scheme of his dispensations. If man were not a corrupt creature, such prayer as the Gospel enjoins would not have been necessary. Had not prayer been an important means for curing those corruptions, a God of perfect wisdom would not have ordered it. He would not have prohibited every thing which tends to inflame and promote them, had they not existed; nor would he have commanded every thing that has a tendency to diminish and remove them, had not their existence been fatal.—Prayer, therefore, is an indispensable part of his economy and of our obedience.

It is a hackneyed objection to the use of Prayer, that it is offending the omniscience of God to suppose he requires information of our wants. But no objection can be more futile. We do not pray to inform God of our wants, but to express our sense of the wants which he already knows. As he has not so much made his promises to our necessities as to our requests, it is reasonable that our requests should be made before we can hope that our necessities will be relieved.—God does not promise to those who want that they shall 'have,' but to those who 'ask;' nor to those who need that they shall 'find,' but to those who 'seek.' So far, therefore, from his previous knowledge of our wants being a ground of objection to Prayer, it is, in fact, the true ground for our application. Were he not Knowledge itself, our information would

be of as little use, as our application would be, were he not Goodness itself.

We cannot attain to a just notion of Prayer while we remain ignorant of our own nature, of the nature of God as revealed in Scripture, of our relation to Him, and dependence on Him. If, therefore, we do not live in the daily study of the Holy Scriptures, we shall want the highest motives to this duty, and the best helps for performing it; if we do, the cogency of these motives, and the inestimable value of these helps, will render argument unnecessary, and exhortation superfluous.

One cause, therefore, of the dulness of many Christians in Prayer, is their slight acquaintance with the sacred volume. They hear it periodically, they read it occasionally, they are contented to know it historically, to consider it superficially; but they do not endeavour to get their minds imbued with its spirit. If they store their memory with its facts, they do not impress their hearts with its truths. They do not regard it as the nutriment on which their spiritual life and growth depend. They do not pray over it: they do not consider all its doctrines as of practical application; they do not cultivate that spiritual discernment, which alone can enable them judiciously to appropriate its promises, and apply its denunciations to their own actual case. They do not use it as an unerring line to ascertain their own rectitude, or detect their own obliquities.

In our retirements we too often fritter away our precious moments—moments rescued from the world—in trivial, sometimes, it is to be feared in corrupt thoughts. But if we must give the reins to our imagination, let us send this excursive faculty to range among great and noble objects. Let it stretch forward, under the sanction of faith and the anticipation of prophecy, to the accomplishment of those glorious promises and tremendous threatenings which will soon be realized in the eternal world. These are topics which, under the safe and sober guidance of Scripture, will fix its largest speculations, and sustain its loftiest flights. The same Scripture, while it expands and elevates the mind, will keep it subject to the dominion of truth; while at the same time it will teach it, that its boldest excursions must fall infinitely short of the astonishing realities of a future state.

Though we cannot pray with a too deep sense of sin, we may make our sins too exclusively the object of our prayers. While we keep, with a self-abasing eye, our own corruptions in view, let us look with equal intentness on that mercy which cleanseth from all sin. Let our prayers be all humiliation, but let them not be all complaint. When men indulge no other thought but that they are attainted rebels, the hopelessness of pardon hardens them into disloyalty. Let them look to the mercy of the King, as well as to the rebellion of the subject. If we contemplate his grace as displayed in the Gospel, then, though our humility will increase, our despair will vanish. Gratitude in this, as in human instances, will create affection, 'We love him because he first loved us.'

Let us, therefore, always keep our unworthiness in view, as a reason why we stand in need of the mercy of God in Christ; but never plead it as a reason why we should not draw nigh to him to implore that mercy. The best men are unworthy for their own sakes; the worst, on repentance, will be accepted for his sake, and through his merits.

In prayer, then, the perfections of God, and especially, his mercies in our redemption, should occupy our thoughts, as much as our sins; our obligations to him as much as our departures from him. We should keep up in our hearts a constant sense of our own weakness, not with a design to discourage the mind and depress the spirits, but with a view to drive us out of ourselves, in search of the Divine assistance. We should contemplate our infirmity, in order to draw us to look for his strength, and to seek that power from God which we vainly look for in ourselves: we do not tell a sick friend of his danger in order to grieve or terrify him, but to induce him to apply to his physician, and to have recourse to his remedy.

Among the charges which have been brought against serious piety, one is, that it teaches men to despair. The charge is just, in one sense, as to the fact; but false in the sense intended. It teaches us to despair, indeed, of ourselves, while it inculcates that faith in a Redeemer, which is the true antidote to despair. Faith quickens the doubting, while it humbles the presumptuous spirit. The lowly Christian takes comfort in the blessed promise, that God will never forsake them that are his. The presumptuous man is equally right in the doctrine; but wrong in applying it. He takes that comfort to himself which was meant for another class of characters. The mal-appropriation of Scripture promises and threatenings is the cause of much error and delusion.

Some devout enthusiasts have fallen into error by an unnatural and impracticable disinterestedness, asserting that God is to be loved exclusively for himself, with an absolute renunciation of any view of advantage to ourselves; yet that prayer cannot be mercenary, which involves God's glory with our own happiness, and makes his will the law of our requests. Though we are to desire the glory of God supremely; though this ought to be our grand actuating principle; yet he has graciously permitted, commanded, invited us, to attach our own happiness to this primary object. The Bible exhibits not only a beautiful, but an inseparable combination of both, which delivers us from the danger of preposterously imagining, than an absolute renunciation of all benefit to ourselves is necessary for the promotion of God's glory on the one hand; and on the other, from seeking any happiness independent of him, and underived from him. In enjoining us to love him supremely, he has connected an unspeakable blessing with a paramount duty, the highest privilege with the most positive command.

What a triumph for the humble Christian to be assured, that 'the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth,' is the God of his life, to know that he is even invited to take the Lord for his God. To close with God's offers, to accept his invitations, to receive God

as our portion must surely be more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than separating our happiness from his glory. To disconnect our interests from his goodness, is at once to detract from his perfections, and to obscure the brightness of our own hopes. The declarations of the inspired writers are confirmed by the authority of the heavenly hosts. They proclaim that the glory of God and the happiness of his creatures, so far from interfering, are connected with each other. We know but of one anthem composed and sung by angels, and this most harmoniously combines 'the glory of God in the highest, with peace on earth, and good will to men.'

'The beauty of Scripture,' says the great Saxon reformer, 'consists in pronouns.' This God is *our* God; God, even our *own* God shall bless us. How delightful the appropriation! to glorify him as being in himself consummate excellence, and to love him from the feeling that his excellence is directed to our felicity! Here modesty would be ingratitude, disinterestedness rebellion. It would be severing ourselves from him, in whom we live, and move, and are; it would be dissolving the astonishing connection which he had condescended to establish between himself and his rational creatures.

The Scripture Saints make this union the chief ground of their grateful exultation: '*My* strength,' '*my* rock,' '*my* fortress,' '*my* deliverer!' Again, 'let the God of *my* salvation be exalted!' Now take away the pronoun, and substitute the article *the*, how comparatively cold is the impression! The consummation of the joy arises from the peculiarity, the intimacy, the endearment of the relation.

Nor to the liberal Christian is the grateful joy diminished, when he blesses his God as 'the God of them that trust in him.' All general blessings, will he say, all providential mercies, are mine individually, are mine as completely as if no other shared in the enjoyment—life, light, the earth and heavens, the sun and stars, whatsoever sustains the body, and recreates the spirits? My obligation is as great as if the mercy had been made purely for me; as great? nay, it is greater; it is augmented by a sense of the millions who participate in the blessing. The same enlargement of personal obligation holds good, nay, rises higher, in the mercies of Redemption. The Lord is *my* Saviour, as completely as if he had redeemed only me. That he has redeemed 'a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,' is diffusion without abatement; it is general participation without individual diminution. Each has all.

In adoring the providence of God, we are apt to be struck with what is new and out of course, while we too much overlook long habitual, and uninterrupted mercies. But common mercies, if less striking, are more valuable, both because we have them always, and for the reason above assigned, because others share them. The ordinary blessings of life are overlooked for the very reason that they ought to be most prized, because they are most uniformly bestowed. They are most essential to our support, and when once they are withdrawn, we begin to find that they are also most essential to our comfort. Nothing raises the price of a blessing like its removal, whereas it was its continuance which should have taught us its worth. We require novelties to awaken our gratitude, not considering that it is the duration of mercies which enhances their value. We want fresh excitements. We consider mercies long enjoyed as things of course, as things to which we have a sort of claim by prescription; as if God had no right to withdraw what he has once bestowed, as if he were obliged to continue what he has once been pleased to confer.

But that the sun has shown unremittingly from the day that God created him, is not a less stupendous exertion of power, than that the hand which fixed him in the heavens, and marked out his progress through them, once said by his servant, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon.' That he has gone on in his strength, driving his uninterrupted career, and 'rejoicing as a giant to run his course,' for six thousand years, is a more astonishing exhibition of Omnipotence than that he should have been once suspended by the hand which set him in motion. That the ordinances of Heaven, that the established laws of nature, should have been for one day interrupted to serve a particular occasion, is a less real wonder, and certainly a less substantial blessing, than that in such a multitude of ages they should have pursued their appointed course, for the comfort of the whole system.

As the affections of the Christian ought to be set on things above, so it is for them that his prayers will be chiefly addressed. God, in promising to 'give those who delight in him the desire of their heart,' could never mean temporal things; for these they might desire improperly as to the object, and inordinately as to the degree. The promise relates principally to spiritual blessings. He not only gives us these mercies, but the very desire to obtain them is also his gift. Here our prayer requires no qualifying, no conditioning, no limitation. We cannot err in our choice, for God himself is the object of it; we cannot exceed in the degree, unless it were possible to love him too well, or to please him too much.

God shows his munificence in encouraging us to ask most earnestly for the greatest things, by promising that the smaller 'shall be added unto us.' We therefore acknowledge his liberality most, when we request the highest favours. He manifests His infinite superiority to earthly fathers, by chiefly delighting to confer those spiritual gifts which *they* less solicitously desire for their children, than those worldly advantages on which God sets so little value.

We should endeavour to render our private devotions effectual remedies for our own particular sins. Prayer against sin, in general, is too indefinite to reach the individual case. We must bring it home to our own hearts, else we may be confessing another man's sins, and overlooking our own. If we have any predominant fault, we should pray more especially against the fault. If we pray for any virtue of which we particularly stand in need, we should dwell on our own deficiencies in that virtue, till our souls become deeply affected with our want of it. Our prayers should be circumstantial, not

as was before observed, for the information of Infinite Wisdom, but for the stirring up of our own dull affections. And as the recapitulation of our wants tends to keep up a sense of our dependence, the enlarging on our especial mercies will tend to keep alive a sense of gratitude; while indiscriminate petitions, confessions, and thanksgiving, leave the mind to wander in indefinite devotion, and unaffecting generalities, without personality, and without appropriation. It must be obvious, that we except th se grand universal points in which all have an equal interest, and which must always form the essence of family, and, especially, of public prayer.

As we ought to live in a spirit of obedience to his commands, so we should live in a frame of waiting for his blessings on our prayers, and in a spirit of gratitude when we have obtained it. This is that 'preparation of the heart' which would always keep us in a posture for duty. If we desert the duty because an immediate blessing does not visibly attend it, it shows that we do not serve God out of conscience, but selfishness; that we grudge expending on Him that service which brings us in no immediate interest. Though he grants not our petition, let us never be tempted to withdraw our application.

Our reluctant devotions may remind us of the remark of a certain great political wit,* who apologized for his late attendance in parliament, by his being detained while a party of soldiers were *dragging a volunteer* to his duty. How many excuses do we find for not being in time! How many apologies for brevity! How many evasions for neglect! How unwilling, too often, are we to come into the Divine presence, how reluctant to remain in it! Those hours which are least valuable for business, which are least seasonable for pleasure, we commonly give to religion. Our energies, which were so readily exerted in the society we have just quitted, are sunk as we approach the Divine presence. Our hearts, which were all alacrity in some frivolous conversation, become cold and inanimate, as if it were the natural property of devotion to freeze the affections. Our animal spirits, which so readily performed their functions before, now slacken their vigour, and lose their vivacity. The sluggish body sympathizes with the unwilling mind, and each promotes the deadness of the other; both are slow in listening to the call of duty; both are soon weary in performing it. How do our fancies rove back to the pleasures we have been enjoying! How apt are the diversified images of those pleasures to mix themselves with our better thoughts, to pull down our higher aspirations! As prayer requires all the energies of the compound being of man, so we too often feel as if there were a confederacy of body, soul, and spirit, to disincline and disqualify us for it.

When the heart is once sincerely turned to religion, we need not, every time we pray, examine into every truth, and seek for conviction over and over again; but assume that those doctrines are true, the truth of which we have already proved. From a general and fixed impression of these principles, will result a taste, a disposedness, a love so intimate, that the convictions of the understanding will become the affections of the heart.

To be deeply impressed with a few fundamental truths, to digest them thoroughly, to meditate on them seriously, to pray over them fervently, to get them deeply rooted in the heart, will be more productive of faith and holiness, than to labour after variety, ingenuity, or elegance. The indulgence of imagination will rather distract than edify. Searching after ingenious thoughts will rather divert the attention from God to ourselves, than promote fixedness of thought, singleness of intention, and devotedness of spirit. Whatever is subtle and refined, is in danger of being unscriptural. If we do not guard the mind, it will learn to set more value on original thoughts than devout affections. It is the business of prayer to cast down imaginations which gratify the natural activity of the mind, while they leave the heart unhumbled.

We should confine ourselves to the present business of the present moment; we should keep the mind in a state of perpetual dependence; we should entertain no long views. '*Now* is the accepted time.' 'To-day we must hear his voice.' 'Give us *this* day our daily bread.' The manna will not keep till to-morrow: to-morrow will have its own wants, and must have its own petitions. To-morrow we must seek anew the bread of heaven.

We should, however, avoid coming to our devotions with unfurnished minds. We should be always laying in materials for prayer, by a diligent course of serious reading, by treasuring up in our minds the most important truths. If we rush into the Divine presence with a vacant, or ignorant, or unprepared mind, with a heart full of the world; as we shall feel no disposition or qualification for the work we are about to engage in, so we cannot expect that our petitions will be heard or granted.' There must be some congruity between the heart and the object, some affinity between the state of our minds and the business in which they are employed, if we would expect success in the work.

We are often deceived both as to the principle and the effect of our prayers. When, from some external cause, the heart is glad, the spirits light, the thoughts ready, the tongue voluble, a kind of spontaneous eloquence is the result; with this we are pleased, and this ready flow we are willing to impose on ourselves for piety.

On the other hand, when the mind is dejected, the animal spirits low, the thoughts confused; when apposite words do not readily present themselves, we are apt to accuse our hearts of want of fervour, to lament our weakness, and to mourn that, because we have had no pleasure in praying our prayers have, therefore, not ascended to the throne of mercy. In both cases we, perhaps, judge ourselves unfairly. These unready accents, these faltering praises, these ill-expressed petitions, may find more acceptance than the florid talk with which we were so well satisfied: the latter consisted, it may be, of shining thoughts, floating on the fancy, eloquent words dwelling on the lips; the former might be the sighing of a contrite spirit abased by the feeling of its own unworthiness, and

* Mr Sheridan.

awed by the perfections of a holy and heart-searching God. The heart is dissatisfied with its own dull and tasteless repetitions which, with all their imperfections, Infinite Goodness may, perhaps, hear with favour.*—We may not only be elated with the fluency but even with the fervency of our prayers. Vanity may grow out of the very act of renouncing it, and we may begin to feel proud at having humbled ourselves so eloquently.

There is, however, a strain and spirit of prayer equally distinct from that facility and copiousness for which we certainly are never the better in the sight of God, and from that constraint and dryness for which we may be never the worse. There is a simple, solid, pious strain of prayer, in which the supplicant is so filled and occupied with a sense of his own dependence, and of the importance of the things for which he asks, and so persuaded of the power and grace of God through Christ to give him those things, that while he is engaged in it, he does not merely imagine, but feels assured that God is nigh to him as a reconciled Father, so that every burden and doubt are taken off from his mind. 'He knows,' as St. John expresses it, 'that he has the petitions he desired of God,' and feels the truth of that promise, 'while they are yet speaking I will hear. This is the perfection of Prayer.

CHAP. IV.

On the Effects of Prayer.

It is objected by a certain class, and on the specious ground of humility too, though we do not always find the objector himself quite as humble as his plea would be thought, that it is arrogant in such insignificant beings as we are to presume to lay our petty necessities before the Great and Glorious God, who cannot be expected to condescend to the multitude of trifling and even interfering requests which are brought before him by his creatures. These and such like objections arise from mean and unworthy thoughts of the Great Governor of the Universe. It seems as if those who make them considered the Most High as 'such a one as themselves;' a Being, who can perform a certain given quantity of business, but who would be overpowered with an additional quantity. Or, at best, is it not considering the Almighty in the light, not of an Infinite God, but of a great man, of a minister, or a king, who, while he superintends public and national concerns, is obliged to neglect small and individual petitions; because his hands being full, he cannot spare that leisure and attention which suffice for every thing? They do not consider him as that infinitely gracious Being, who, while he beholds at once all that is doing in heaven and in earth, is at the same time as attentive to the prayer of the poor destitute, as present to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, as if each of these forlorn creatures were individually the object of his undivided attention.

These critics, who are for sparing the Supreme Being the trouble of our prayers, and who, if I may so speak without profaneness, would relieve Omnipotence of part of his burden, by assigning to his care only such a portion as may be more easily managed, seem to have no adequate conception of his attributes.

They forget that infinite wisdom puts him as easily within reach of all knowledge, as infinite power does of all performance; that he is a Being in whose plans complexity makes no difficulty, variety no obstruction, and multiplicity no confusion; that to ubiquity distance does not exist; that to infinity space is annihilated; that past, present, and future, are discerned more accurately at one glance of His eye, to whom a thousand years are as one day, than a single moment of time or a single point of space can be by ours.

Another class continue to bring forward, as pertinaciously as if it had never been answered, the exhausted argument, that seeing God is immutable, no petitions of ours can ever change Him: that events themselves being settled in a fixed and unalterable course, and bound in a fatal necessity, it is folly to think that we can disturb the established laws of the universe, or interrupt the course of Providence by our prayers; and that it is absurd to suppose these firm decrees can be reversed by any requests of ours.

Without entering into the wide and trackless field of fate and free will, we would only observe, that these objections apply equally to all human actions as well as to prayer. It may therefore with the same propriety be urged, that seeing God is immutable and his decrees unalterable, therefore our *actions* can produce no change in Him or in our own state. Weak as well as impious reasoning! It may be questioned whether even the modern French and German philosophers might not be prevailed upon to acknowledge the existence of God, if they might make such a use of his attributes.

How much more wisdom as well as happiness results from a humble Christian spirit! Such a plain practical text as 'Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you,' carries more consolation, more true knowledge of his wants and their remedy to the heart of a penitent sinner, than all the tomes of casuistry, which have puzzled the world ever since the question was first set afloat by its original propounders.

And as the plain man only got up and walked, to prove there was such a thing as motion, in answer to the philosopher who, in an elaborate theory, denied it; so the plain Christian, when he is borne down with the assurance that there is no efficacy in prayer, requires no better argument to repel the assertion than the good he finds in prayer itself. A Christian knows, because he feels, that prayer is, though in a way to him inscrutable, the medium of con-

* Of these sort of repetitions, our admirable Church Liturgy has been accused as a fault; but this defect, if it be one, happily accommodates itself to our infirmities. Where is the favoured being whose attention never wanders, whose heart accompanies his lips in every sentence? Is there no absence of mind in the petitioner, no wandering of the thoughts, no inconstancy of the heart, which these repetitions are wisely calculated to correct, to rouse the dead attention, to bring back the strayed affections?

nexion between God and his rational creatures, the method appointed by Him to draw down his blessings upon us. The Christian knows that prayer is the appointed means of uniting two ideas, one of the highest magnificence, the other of the most profound lowliness, within the compass of the imagination; namely, that it is the link of communication between 'the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,' and that heart of the 'contrite in which he delights to dwell.' He knows that this inexplicable union between beings so unspeakably, so essentially different, can only be maintained by prayer; that this is the strong but secret chain which unites time with eternity, earth with heaven, man with God.

The plain Christian, as was before observed, cannot explain why it is so; but while he *feels* the efficacy, he is contented to let the learned *define* it; and he will no more postpone prayer till he can produce a chain of reasoning on the manner in which he derives benefit from it, than he will postpone eating till he can give a scientific lecture on the nature of digestion: he is contented with knowing that his meat has nourished him: and he leaves to the philosopher, who may choose to defer his meal till he has elaborated his treatise, to starve in the interim.—The Christian *feels* better than he is able to explain, that the functions of his spiritual life can no more be carried on without habitual prayer, than those of his natural life without frequent bodily nourishment. He feels renovation and strength grow out of the use of the appointed means, as necessarily in the one case as in the other. He feels that the health of his soul can no more be sustained, and its powers kept in continual vigour by the *prayers* of a distant day, than his body by the *aliment* of a distant day.

But there is one motive to the duty in question, far more constraining to the true believer than all others that can be named; more imperative than any argument on its utility, than any conviction of its efficacy, even than any experience of its consolations. *Prayer is the command of God;* the plain, positive, repeated injunction of the Most High, who declares, 'He will be inquired of.' This is enough to secure the obedience of the Christian, even though a promise were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this case, to our unspeakable comfort, the promise is as clear as the precept: '*Ask*, and ye shall *receive*.' This is encouragement enough for the plain Christian. As to the *manner* in which prayer is made to coincide with the general scheme of God's plan in the government of human affairs; how God has left himself at liberty to reconcile our prayer with his own predetermined will, the Christian does not very critically examine, his precise and immediate duty being to pray, and not to examine.

In the mean time it is enough for the humble believer to be assured, that the Judge of all the earth is doing right; it is enough for him to be assured in that word of God 'which cannot lie,' of numberless actual instances of the efficacy of prayer in obtaining blessings and averting calamities, both national and individual; it is enough for him to be convinced experimentally by that internal evidence which is perhaps paramount to all other evidence, the comfort he himself has received from prayer, when all other comforts have failed and, above all, to end with the same motive with which we began, the only motive indeed which *he* requires for the performance of any duty; it is motive enough for him,—that *Thus saith the Lord.*

Others there are, who, perhaps not controverting any of these premises, yet neglect to build practical consequences on the admission of them; who neither denying the duty nor the efficacy of prayer, yet go on to live either in the irregular observance or the total neglect of it, as appetite, or pleasure, or business, or humour, may happen to predominate; and who by living almost without prayer, may be said, 'to live almost without God in the world.' To such we can only say, that they little know what they lose. The time is hastening on when they will look upon those blessings as invaluable, which now they think not worth asking for; when they will bitterly regret the absence of those means and opportunities which now they either neglect or despise. 'O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end!'

There are again, others, who it is to be feared, having once lived in the habit of prayer, yet not having been well grounded in those principles of faith and repentance on which genuine prayer is built, have by degrees totally discontinued it. 'They do not find,' say they, 'that their affairs prosper the better or are the worse; or perhaps they were unsuccessful in their affairs even before they dropt the practice, and so had no encouragement to go on.' They do not *know* that they had no encouragement; they do not *know* how much worse their affairs might have gone on, had they discontinued it sooner, or how their prayers helped to retard their ruin. Or they do not *know* that perhaps 'they asked amiss,' or that, if they had obtained what they asked, they might have been far more unhappy. For a true believer never 'restrains prayer,' because he is not certain that he obtains every individual request; for he is persuaded that God, in compassion to our ignorance, sometimes in great mercy withholds what we desire, and often disappoints his most favoured children by giving them not what they ask, but what he knows is really good for them. The froward child, as a pious prelate* observes, cries for the shining blade, which the tender parent withholds, knowing it would cut his fingers.

Thus to persevere when we have not the encouragement of visible success, is an evidence of tried faith. Of this holy perseverance Job was a noble instance. Defeat and disappointment rather stimulated than stopped *his* prayers Though in a vehement strain of passionate eloquence he exclaims, 'I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment:' yet so persuaded was he notwithstanding of the duty of continuing this holy importunity, that he persisted against all human hope, till he attained to that exalted pitch of

* Bishop Hall.

unshaken faith, by which he was enabled to break out into that sublime apostrophe, 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.'

But may we not say that there is a considerable class, who not only bring none of the objections which we have stated against the use of prayer; who are so far from rejecting, that they are exact and regular in the performance of it; who yet take it up on as low ground as is consistent with their ideas of their own safety; who, while they consider prayer as an indispensable form, believe nothing of that change of heart and of those holy tempers which it is intended to produce? Many, who yet adhere scrupulously to the letter, are so far from entering into the spirit of this duty, that they are strongly inclined to suspect those of hypocrisy or fanaticism who adopt the true scriptural views of prayer. Nay, as even the Bible may be so wrested as to be made to speak almost any language in support of almost any opinion, these persons lay hold on Scripture itself, to bear them out in their own slight views of this duty; and they profess to borrow from thence the ground of that censure which they cast on the more serious Christians. Among the many passages which have been made to convey a meaning foreign to their original designs, none have been seized upon with more avidity by such persons than the pointed censures of our Saviour on those 'who for a *pretence* make long prayers;' as well as on those 'who use vain repetitions, and think they shall be heard for much speaking.' Now the things here intended to be reproved were the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the ignorance of the heathen, together with the error of all those who depended on the success of their prayers, while they imitated the deceit of the one, or the folly of the other. But our Saviour never meant that those severe reprehensions should cool or abridge the devotion of pious Christians, to which they do not at all apply.

More or fewer words, however, so little constitute the true value of prayer, that there is no doubt but one of the most affecting specimens on record is the short petition of the Publican, full fraught as it is with that spirit of contrition and self-abasement which is the very principle and soul of prayer. And this specimen, perhaps, is the best model for that sudden lifting up of the heart which we call ejaculation. But we doubt, in general, whether the few hasty words, to which these frugal petitioners would stint the scanty devotions of others and themselves, will be always found ample enough to satisfy the humble penitent, who, being a sinner, has much to confess; who, hoping he is a pardoned sinner, has much to acknowledge. Such a one, perhaps, cannot always pour out the fulness of his soul within the prescribed abridgments.

Even the sincerest Christian, when he wishes to find his heart warm, has often to lament its coldness though he feels that he has received much, and has, therefore, much to be thankful for, yet he is not able at once to bring his wayward spirit into such a posture as shall fit it for the solemn duty. Such a one has not merely his form to repeat, but he has his tempers to reduce to order, his affections to excite, and his peace to make. His thoughts may be realizing the sarcasm of the Prophet on the idol Baal, 'they may be gone a journey,' and must be recalled; his heart, perhaps, 'sleepeth, and must be awaked.' A devout supplicant, too, will labour to affect and warm his mind with a sense of the great and gracious attributes of God, in imitation of the holy men of old. Like Jehosaphat, he will sometimes enumerate 'the power and the might, and the mercies of the Most High,' in order to stir up the sentiments of awe, and gratitude, and love, and humility in his own soul.* He will labour to imitate the example of his Saviour, whose heart dilated with the expression of the same holy affections. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.' A heart thus animated, thus warmed with Divine love, cannot always scrupulously limit itself to the mere *business* of prayer, if I may so speak. It cannot content itself with merely spreading out its own necessities, but expands in contemplating the perfections of Him to whom he is addressing them.

The humble supplicant, though he be no longer *governed* by a love of the world, yet, grieves to find that he cannot totally exclude it from his thoughts. Though he has on the whole a deep sense of his own wants and of the abundant provision which is made for them in the Gospel; yet, when he most wishes to be rejoicing in those strong motives for love and gratitude, alas! even then he has to mourn his worldliness, his insensibility, his deadness. He has to deplore the littleness and vanity of the objects which are even then drawing away his heart from his Redeemer. The best Christian is but too liable during the temptations of the day, to be ensnared by 'the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' and is not always brought without effort to reflect that he is but dust and ashes. How can even good persons, who are just come, perhaps, from listening to the flattery of their fellow worms, acknowledge before God, without any preparation of the heart, that they are miserable sinners? They require a little time to impress on their own souls the truth of that solemn confession of sin which they are making to him, without which, brevity, and not length might constitute hypocrisy.

Even the sincerely pious have in prayer grievous wanderings to lament, from which others mistakingly suppose the advanced Christian to be exempt. Such wanderings that, as an old divine has observed, it would exceedingly humble a good man, could he, after he had prayed, be made to see his prayers written down, with exact interlineations of all the vain and impertinent thoughts which had thrust themselves in amongst them. So that such a one will, indeed, from a strong sense of these distractions, feel deep occasion, with the Prophet, to ask forgiveness for 'the iniquity of his *holy* things;' and would find cause enough for humiliation every night, had he to lament the sins of his prayers only.

We know that such a brief petition, as 'Lord

* Bishop Hall.

* 2 Chron. xx. 5, 6.

help my unbelief,' if the supplicant be in so happy a frame, and the prayer be darted up with such strong faith, that his very soul mounts with the petition, may suffice to draw down a blessing which may be withheld from the more prolix petitioner: yet if by prayer we do not mean a mere form of words, whether it be long or short; but that secret communion between God and the soul which is the very breath and being of religion; then is the Scripture so far from suggesting that short measure of which it is accused, that it expressly says, 'Pray without ceasing;'—'Pray evermore;'—'I will that men pray every where;'—'Continue instant in prayer.'

If such 'repetitions' as these objectors reprobate, stir up desires as yet unawakened, or protract affections already excited (for '*vain* repetitions' are such as awaken or express no new desire, and serve no religious purpose;) then are 'repetitions' not to be condemned. And that our Saviour did not give the warning against 'long prayers and repetitions,' in the sense these objectors allege, is evident from his own practice; for once we are told 'he continued *all night* in prayer to God.' And again, in a most awful crisis of his life, it is expressly said, 'He prayed the *third* time, using *the same words*.'

All habits gain by exercise; of course the Christian graces gain force and vigour by being called out, and, as it were, mustered in prayer. Love, faith, and trust in the Divine promises, if they were not kept alive by this stated intercourse with God, would wither and die.

CHAP. V.

Vain Excuses for the Neglect of Prayer.

There are not a few, who offer apologies for the neglect of spiritual duties, by saying they believe them to be right, but that they are tempted to neglect the exercise of them by idleness, or business, by company, or pleasure. This may be true, but temptations are not compulsions. The great adversary of souls may fill the fancy with alluring images of enjoyment, so as to draw us away from any duty, but it is in our own choice either to indulge, or through grace to repel them. He may act upon the passions through outward objects, which introduce them to the mind through the senses, but the grace of God enables all who faithfully ask it, to withstand them.

If we were not at liberty to reject temptation, sin would be no sin. It is the offer of the grace of resistance not used, which makes the offender to be without excuse. All the motives and the allurements to sin would be ineffectual, would we keep up in our minds what are its 'wages'—death; death spiritual, death eternal!

Of all the excuses for the neglect of prayer, the man of business justifies his omission to himself by the most plausible apologies.—Many of this class, active for themselves, and useful to the world, are far from disputing either the propriety, or the duty of prayer; they are willing however for the present, to turn over this duty to the clergy, to the idle, to women and children. They allow it to be an important thing, but not the most important. They acknowledge, if men have time to spare, they cannot spend it better; but *they* have no time. It is indeed a duty, but a duty not to be compared with that of the court, the bar, the public office, the counting-house, or the shop.

Now, in pleading for the importance of the one, we should be the last to detract from that of the other. We only plead for their entire compatability.

We pass over the instance of Daniel, a man of business and a statesman, and of many other public characters, recorded in Scripture, and confine ourselves to the example of Nehemiah. He was not only an officer in the court of the greatest king of the East, but it was his duty to be much in the royal presence. He was on a particular occasion, under deep affliction; for Jerusalem was in ruins! On a certain day his sadness was so great, as to be visible to the king, at whose table he was attending.

The monarch enquired the cause of his sorrow, and what request he had to make.—He instantly 'prayed to the God of heaven,' doubtless to strengthen him, and then made his petition to the king for no less a boon, than to allow him to rebuild the walls of the sacred city. His prayer preceded his petition. It was that prayer, which gave him courage to present that petition, and which probably induced the sovereign to grant it. What a double encouragement is here given to the courtier, both to pray to God, and to speak truth to a king!

Though the plea of the man of business, for his own particular exemption, can by no means be granted, yet it is the sense he entertains of the value of his professional duties, which deceives him. It leads him to believe, that there can be no evil in substituting business for devotion. He is conscious that he is industrious, and he knows that industry is a great moral quality. He is rightly persuaded, that the man of pleasure has no such plea to produce. He therefore imposes on himself, with the belief that there *can* be no harm in substituting a moral for a religious exercise; for he has learned to think highly of morality, while he assigns to religion only an inferior degree in his scale of duties.

He usually goes to church once on the Sunday; but it does not at all infringe on his religious system to examine his accounts, to give a great dinner, or to begin a journey on that day.

Now it is a serious truth, that there is no man to whom prayer is more imperatively a duty, or more obviously a necessity, than to the man of business; whether in the higher or the middle classes of society. There is no man who more stands in need of quieting his anxieties, regulating his tempers, cooling his spirits by a devout application for the blessing of God; none to whom it is more necessary to implore the divine protection for the duties, or preservation from the dangers of the scene in which he is about to engage; none to whom it is more important to solicit direction in the difficulties which the day may produce; none on whom it

is more incumbent to solicit support against the temptations which may be about to assail him; none to whom the petition for an enlightened conscience, an upright intention, a sound probity, and an undeviating sincerity, is of more importance.

What is so likely as prayer to enable him to stand prepared to meet the accidental fluctuations in his affairs, to receive without inebriation, a sudden flow of prosperous fortune, or to sustain any adverse circumstances with resignation?

Even persons in more retired situations, even those who have made considerable advances in religion cannot but acknowledge how much the ordinary and necessary cares of daily life, especially, how much any unexpected accession to them, are likely to cause absence and distraction in their devotions:—how much then ought they, whose whole life is business, to be on their guard against these dangers, to double their vigilance against them, and to implore direction under them.

Were the Christian militant accustomed never to engage in the moral battle of daily life, without putting on this panoply, the shafts of temptation would strike with a feeble and erring blow; they would not so deeply pierce tho guarded heart. And were fervent humble daily prayer once conscientiously adopted, its effects would reach beyond the week-day engagements. It would gradually extend its benign influence to the postponing of settling accounts, the festive dinner, and the not absolutely necessary journey, to one of those six days in which we are enjoined to labour. It would lead him to the habit of doing 'no manner of work' on that day, in which the doing of it was prohibited by the great Lawgiver in his own person.

We have more than once alluded to the diversities of character, occasional events, difference in the state of mind as well as of circumstances, which may not only render the prayer which is suitable to one man unsuitable to another, but unsuitable to the same man under every alteration of circumstances.

But among the proper topics for prayer, there is one which, being of universal interest ought not to be omitted. For by whatever dissimilarity of character, capacity, profession, station, or temper, the condition of man, and, of course, the nature of prayer, is diversified—there is one grand point of union, one circumstance, one condition, in which they must all meet; one state, of which every man is equally certain; one event which happeneth to all,—'it is appointed unto every man once to die.' The rugged road of sorrow, the flowery path of pleasure, as well as

'The paths of glory, lead but to the grave.'

In praying, therefore, against the fear of death, we do not pray against a contingent but a certain evil; we pray to be delivered from the overwhelming dread of that house which is appointed for all living—we are put in mind that all who are born must die!

'The end of all things is at hand.' To what purpose does the apostle convert this awful proclamation? Does he use it to encourage gloomy tempers, to invite to unprofitable melancholy? No: he uses the solemn admonition to stir us up to moral goodness—therefore, 'be sober'—he does more, he uses it to excite us to religious vigilance,—'and watch unto prayer.'

Prayer against the fear of death, by keeping up in us a constant remembrance of our mortality, will help to wean us from a too intimate attachment to the things we are so soon to quit. By this habitual preparation to meet our Judge we shall be brought to pray more earnestly for an interest in the great Intercessor; and to strive more effectually against every offence which may aggravate the awfulness of that meeting.

Fervent prayer, that divine grace may prepare us for death, will, if cordially adopted, answer many great moral purposes. It will remind every individual of every class that 'the time is short'—that 'there is no repentance in the grave.'

Perhaps even the worldly and thoughtless man, under an occasional fit of dejection, or an accidental disappointment, may be brought to say, 'When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God.'—Oh, think upon Him, call upon Him, *now*,—now, when you are in prosperity; now, when your fortunes are flourishing; now, when your hill is so strong that you think it shall never be removed: think upon Him, call upon Him, when the scene is the brightest, when the world courts, flatteries invite, and pleasures betray you; think on Him, while you are able to think at all, while you possess the capacity of thinking. The time may come, when 'He may turn his face from you, and you will be troubled.' Think of God, when the alluring images of pleasure and of profit would seduce you from Him. Prosperity is the season of peculiar peril. 'It is the bright day that brings forth the adder.' Think of God when the tempting world says, 'All this I will give thee.' Trust not the insolvent world, it has cheated every creditor that ever trusted it. It will cheat you.

To the *man of opulence*, who heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, prayer will be a constant memento: it will remind him that he walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; it will remind him of laying up treasures where thieves cannot enter, nor rust corrode.

The habit of praying against the fear of death, would check the pride of youthful *beauty*, by reminding her how soon it must say to the worm, Thou art my father, and to corruption, Thou art my mother and sister.

The *man of genius*, he who thought that of making many books there would be no end; who, in his zeal to write, had neglected to pray; who thought little of any immortality but that which was to be conferred by the applause of dying creatures like himself; who, in the vanity of possessing talents, had forgotten that he must one day account for the application of them; if happily he should be brought to see the evil of his own heart, to feel the wants of his own soul, how intense will be his repentance, how deep his remorse, that he had loved the praise of men more than the praise of God! how fervently will he pray that his mercies may not aggravate the account of his sins; that his talents may not become the instrument of his

punishment! How earnestly will he supplicate for pardon, how devoutly will he 'give glory to God, before his feet stumble on the dark mountains!'

The *man of business*, to whom we have already adverted, who thought his schemes so deeply laid, his speculations so prudently planned, that nothing could frustrate them; who calculated that the future was as much in his power as the present, forgot that death, that grand subverter of projects, might interpose his *veto*. This man, who could not find time to pray, must find time to die—he may at length find—happy if he ever find it, that he cannot meet his end with a peaceful heart, and a resigned spirit, without the preparation of prayer for support in that awful period, 'when his purposes shall be broken off and all his thoughts perish.'

The *man of pleasure*, alas! what shall we say for *him*? He is sunk to the lowest step of degradation in the moral scale; he has not even human supports; he has robbed himself even of the ordinary consolations resorted to by ordinary men. He has no stay on which to lay hold, no twig at which to catch, no pretence by which to flatter himself into a false peace; no recollection of past usefulness; he has neither served his country; nor benefited society—what shall we say for him? If he pray not for himself, we must pray for him—with God all things are possible.

The *statesman*, indefatigable in the public service, distinguished for integrity; but neglecting the offices of Christianity; whose lofty character power had not warped, nor cupidity debased, but whose religious principles, though they had never been renounced, had not been kept in exercise; a spirit of rare disinterestedness; a moralist of unblanched honour, but who pleaded that duty had left him little time for devotion! Should divine grace incline him at last to seek God, should he begin to pray to be prepared for death and judgment, he will deeply regret with the contrite cardinal, not that he served his king faithfully, but that his higher services had not been devoted to their highest object. In this frame of mind, that ambition which was satisfied with what earth could give, or kings reward, will appear no longer glorious in his eyes. True and just to his sovereign, devoted to his country, faithful to all but his Saviour and himself, he now laments that he had neglected to seek a better country, neglected to serve the King Eternal, the blessed and only Potentate; neglected to obtain an interest in a kingdom which shall not be moved. He feels that mere patriotism, grand as is its object, and important as is its end, will not afford support to a soul sinking at the approach of the inevitable hour, awed at the view of final judgment.

But these great and honourable persons are the very men to whom superior cares, and loftier duties, and higher responsibilities render prayer even more necessary, were it possible than to others. Nor does this duty trench upon other duties, for the compatabilities of prayer are universal. It is an exercise which has the property of incorporating itself with every other; not only not impeding, but advancing it. If secular thoughts and vain imaginations often break in on our devout employments, let us allow Religion to vindicate her rights, by uniting herself with our worldly occupations. There is no crevice so small at which devotion may not slip in; in no other instance of so rich a blessing being annexed to so easy a condition; no other case in which there is any certainty, that to ask is to have. This the suitors to the great do not always find so easy from them as the great themselves may find from God.

Not only the elevation on which they stand makes this fence necessary for their personal security, by enabling them to bear the height without giddiness, but the guidance of God's hand is so essential to the operations they conduct, that the public prosperity, no less than their own safety, is involved in the practice of habitual prayer. God will be more likely to bless the hand which steers, and the head which directs, when both are ruled by the heart which prays. Happily we need not look out of our own age or nation for instances of public men, who, while they govern the country, are themselves governed by a religious principle; who petition the Almighty for direction, and praise Him for success.

The *hero*, who, in the hot engagement, surrounded with the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance of war,' bravely defied death; forgot all that was personal, and only remembered—nobly remembered, his country, and his immediate duty;—animated with the glory that was to be acquired with his arm, and almost ready to exclaim with the Roman patriot;

> '——————————What pity
> That we can die but once to serve our country!'

yet this hero, if he had ever made a conscience of prayer, may he not hereafter find, that the most successful instrumentality is a distinct thing in itself, and will be different in its results, from personal piety? May he not find that, though he saved others, himself he cannot save?

If, however, in after-life, in the cool shade of honourable retirement, he be brought, through the grace of God, to habituate himself to earnest prayer, he will deeply regret that he ever entered the field of battle without imploring the favour of the God of battles; that he had ever returned alive from slaughtered squadrons, without adoring the Author of his providential preservation. If his penitence be sincere, his prayer will be effectual. It will fortify him under the more depressing prospect of that death which is soon to be encountered in the solitude of his darkened chamber, without witnesses, without glory, without the cheering band, without the spirit-stirring drum; without the tumultuous acclamation; with no objects to distract his attention; no conflicting concerns to divide his thoughts; no human arm, either of others or his own, on which to depend. This timely reflection, this late, though never *too* late prayer, may still prepare him for a peaceful dying-bed; may lead him to lean on a stronger arm than his own, or that of an army; may conduct him to a victory over his last enemy, and thus dispose him to meet death in a safer state than when he despised it in the field, may bring him

to acknowledge, that while he continued to live without subjection to the Captain of his salvation, though he had fought bravely, he had not yet fought the good fight.

CHAP. VI.

Characters who reject Prayer.

Among the many articles of erroneous calculation, to which so much of the sin and misery of life may be attributed, the neglect or misuse of prayer will not form the lightest. The prophet Jeremiah, in his impassioned address to the Almighty, makes no distinction between those who acknowledge no God, and those who live without prayer. 'Pour out thy fury, O Lord, upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.'*

Some duties are more incumbent on some persons, and some on others; depending on the difference of talents, wealth, leisure, learning, station, and opportunities; but the duty of prayer is of imperative obligation; it is universal, because it demands none of any of the above requisites; it demands only a willing heart, a consciousness of sin, a sense of dependence, a feeling of helplessness. Those who voluntarily neglect it, shut themselves out from the presence of their Maker. 'I know you not,' must assuredly be the sentence of exclusion on those who thus 'know not God.' Nothing, it is true, can exclude them from His inspection, but they exclude themselves from his favour.

Many nearly renounce prayer, by affecting to make it so indefinite a thing, as not to require regular exercise. Just as many, also unhallow the Sabbath, who pretend they do nothing on week-days, which they should fear to do on Sundays. The truth is, instead of sanctifying the week-days by raising them to the duties of Sunday—which is indeed impracticable, let men talk as they please,—they desecrate the Sabbath to secular purposes, and so contrive to keep no Sunday at all.

Stated seasons for indispensable employments are absolutely necessary for so desultory, so versatile a creature as man. That which is turned over to any chance-time is seldom done at all; and those who despise the recurrence of appointed times and seasons are only less censurable than those who rest in them.

Other duties and engagements have their allotted seasons; why, then, should the most important duty in which an immortal being can be employed, by being left to accident, become liable to occasional omission, liable to increasing neglect, liable to total oblivion?

All the other various works of God know their appointed times;—the seasons, the heavenly bodies, day and night, seed-time and harvest;—all set an example of undeviating regularity. Why should man, the only thinking, be the only disorderly, work of Almighty power?

But whilst we are asserting the necessity of seasons of prayer, let us not be suspected of attaching undue importance to them; for all these are but the frame work, the scaffolding the mere mechanical and subsidiary adjuncts; they are but the preparations for Christian worship; they remind us, they intimate to us, that an important work is to be done, but are no part of the work itself.

They, therefore, who most insist on the value of stated devotions, must never lose sight of that grand, and universal prime truth, that wherever we are, still we are in God's presence; whatever we have is His gift; whatever we hope is His promise; feelings which are commensurate with all time, all places, and limited to no particular scenes or seasons.

There is in some, in many it is to be feared, a readiness to acknowledge this general doctrine, which what is miscalled natural religion teaches; but who are far from including in their system the peculiarities, the duties, the devotions of Christianity. These are decorous men of the world, who, assuming the character of philosophical liberality, value themselves on having shaken off the shackles of prejudice, superstition, and system. They acknowledge a Creator of the universe, but it is in a vague and general way. They worship a Being 'whose temple is all space;' that is, every where but in the human heart. They put him as far as possible from themselves. Believing He has no providential care of them, they feel no personal interest in Him. God and nature are with them synonymous terms. That the creation of the world was His work, they do not go the length of denying; but that its government is in His hands, is with them very problematical.

In any case, however, they are assured that a Being of such immensity requires not the littleness of superstious forms, nor the petty limitations of stated seasons, and regular devotions; that he is infinitely above attending to our paltry concerns, though God himself anticipated this objection, when he condescended to declare, 'He that offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me.'

One says, *he* can adore the Author of nature in the contemplation of his works; that the mountains and the fields are *his* altar for worship. Another says, that his notion of religion is to deal honestly in his commerce with the world; both insist that they can serve God any where, and every where.—We know they can and we hope they do; but our Saviour, who knew the whole make of man, his levity, instability, and unfixedness, and who was yet no friend to the formalist or the superstitious, not only commands, at the hour of prayer, our entering into the closet, but our shutting the door, —a tacit reproof, perhaps, of the devotion of the Sadducean, as well as the publicity of the Pharisaic religion, but certainly an admonition of general obligation.

In treating of prayer, it would be a superfluous labour to address unbelievers with the same

* We have not thought it necessary to touch upon family or public worship, assuming that those who habitually observe private prayer will conscientiously attend to the more public exercises of devotion; and when it is recollected that the Divine Being, who performed a miracle to feed the multitude, that He might set an example of prayer in every possible form, previously blessed the simple but abundant meal, how shall a *dependent* creature dare omit a duty so sanctified.

arguments or persuasions which we would humbly propose to such as aver, with whatever degree of conviction, their belief in Christianity. It would be folly to address them with motives drawn from a book which they do not believe or do not read. With those who are ignorant of the first principles of religion, or those who reject them, we have no common ground on which to stand. St. Paul, with his usual discrimination, has left us an example in this as well as in all other cases. With the philosophical Athenians, he confined his reasonings to natural religion. To the Jewish king Agrippa, who 'believed the prophets,' in telling the story of his own conversion, he most judiciously introduced the great doctrines of remission of sins and justification by faith.

If the Pyrrhonist in question were to see a genuine Christian character delineated in all its dimensions, marked with its fair lineaments, and enlivened by its quickening spirit, such, for instance, as is exemplified in the character of St. Paul, he would consider it as a mere picture of the imagination; and would no more believe its reality than he believes that of Xenophon's Prince, the Stoic's Wise Man, Quintilian's Perfect Orator, or any other Platonic or Utopian representation. Or could he be brought to believe its actual existence, he would set such a man far above the necessity of prayer; he would emancipate him in his own independent worth: for how should he ever suspect that such a man would ever pray at all, much less would be in prayer more abundant, in humiliation more profound, in self-renunciation more abased?

Is it not probable that some of those inquiring minds, who adorned the Porch and the Academy, as well as the more favoured men under the old dispensation, who saw the future through the dim and distant perspective of prophecy, would have rejoiced to see the things which you see, and have not believed?

How gratefully would many of these illustrious spirits have accepted advantages which you overlook! How joyfully would they have received from Him who cannot lie the assurance, that if they would seek of Him that truth after which they 'were feeling,' they should find it! How gladly would that sublime and elegant spirit, whose favourite theme was pure spiritual love, have listened to the great apostle of love; to him who caught the flame as he leaned on the bosom of his affectionate Master!

How would this same exalted genius, who taught the immortality of the soul to the blind, yet blind Athenians,—he, whose penetrating mind rather guessed than knew what he taught,—whose keen eye caught some glimpses of a brighter state through the darkness which surrounded him,—how would he have gloried in that light and immortality which the Gospel revelation has brought to light?—but with what unspeakable rapture would he have learned that He who revealed the life could *give* it, that he who promised immortality could *bestow* it! With what obedient transport would he have heard this touching apostrophe, at once a strong reproof and a tender invitation,—'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!'—Ye philosophising cavillers, who live in the meridian splendour of this broad day, 'how will *you* escape, if you neglect so great salvation?'

But if pride, the dominant intellectual sin, keeps the sceptic aloof from the humiliating duties of devotion, the habitual indulgence of the senses, in another class, proves an equal cause of alienating the heart from prayer.

The man absorbed by ease and enjoyment, and sunk in the relaxing softness of a voluptuous life, has a natural distaste to every thing that stands in opposition to the delights of that life. It is the smoothness of his course which makes it so slippery. He is lost before he feels that he is sinking. For whether we plunge at once from a precipitous height, or slide down from it on an inclined plane, still, while there is a yawning gulf at the bottom, our destruction is equally inevitable.

The systematic but decorous sensualist is one whose life is a course of sober luxury, of measured indulgence. He contrives to reconcile an abandonment of sound principle with a kind of orderly practice. He inquires rather what is decent than what is right; what will secure the favourable opinion of the world, especially his own class, rather than what will please God. His object is to make the most of this world. Selfishness has established his throne in his heart. His study is to make every thing and every person subservient to his own convenience, or pleasure, or profit, yet without glaringly trespassing on the laws of propriety or custom. Self is the source and centre of all his actions; but though this governing principle is always on the watch for its gratification, yet, as part of that gratification depends on a certain degree of reputation it frequently leads him to do right things, though without right motives; for the main spring sometimes sets the right in motion as well as the wrong.

He goes to church on all public occasions, but without devotion; gives alms without charity; subscribes to public institutions without being interested in their prosperity, except as they are frequently succeeded by a pleasant dinner and good company, and as the subscription-list of names he knows will be published. He lives on good terms with different, and even opposite classes of men, without being attached to any; he does them favours with affection, knowing that he shall have occasion to solicit favours in return, for he never does a small kindness without a view to asking a greater.

He deprecates excess in every thing, but always lives upon its confines.

Prayer enters not into his plan,—he has nothing to ask, for he has all in himself,—thanksgiving is still less his practice, for what he has he deserves.

He has read that 'to enjoy is to obey,' and he is always ready to give you this cheerful proof of the most unlimited obedience. He respect the laws of the country, especially such as guard property and game, and eagerly punishes the violators of both. But as to the laws of God, he thinks they were made to guard the possessions of the rich, to punish the vicious poor, and to frighten those who have nothing to lose. Yet he respects some of the commandments, and would placard on every post and pillar that

which says, 'Thou shalt not steal;' whilst he thinks that which says, 'Thou shalt not covet,' might be expunged from the Decalogue.

If you happen to speak of the helplessness of man, he thinks you are alluding to some paralytic; if of his dependence, to some hanger-on of a great man; if of his sinfulness, he adopts your opinion, for he reads the Newgate Calender; but of sin, as an inherent principle, of the turpitude of sin, except as it disturbs society, he knows nothing; but religion as a principle of action, but prayer as a source of peace or a ground of hope, he neither knows nor desires to know. The stream of life glides smoothly on without it; why should he ruffle its placid flow! why should he break in on the course of enjoyment with self-imposed austerities? He believes himself to be respected by his fellow-men, and the favour of God is not in all his thoughts. His real character the great day of decision will discover. Till then he will have two characters.

'Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,' is perhaps the state of all others which most disqualifies and unfits for prayer. Not only the apostrophe excites the bodily appetite, but the SOUL is called upon to contemplate, to repose on, the soothing prospect, the delights of that voluptuousness for which the 'much goods are laid up.'

But when the prosperous fool says, 'soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,'—the prosperous Christian says, 'soul tremble at thine case—be on thy guard.—Thou hast, indeed, much goods laid up for thee, but it is in a future world. Lose not a large inheritance for a paltry possession; forfeit not an unalienable reversion for a life interest,—a life which this very night may be required of thee.'

Thus we see what restrains prayer in these two classes of character. The sceptic does not pray, because he does not believe that God is a hearer of prayer. The voluptuary, because he believes that God is such a one as himself, and because he has already gotten all that he wants of Him. His gold, and the means of gratifying his sensuality, would not be augmented by the dry duties of devotion; and with an exercise which would increase neither, he can easily dispense.

CHAP. VII.

Errors in Prayer

IT has lately been observed by a distinguished Christian orator, that 'many profess to believe the Bible to be true, who do not believe the truths *in* the Bible;' so may we not say, that all desire the gifts of God, but they do not desire God. If we profess to love Him, it is for our own sake; when shall we begin to love Him for himself? Many who do not go the length of omitting prayer, but pray merely from custom, or education, frequently complain that they find no benefit from prayer; others that they experience not the support and comfort promised to it. May not those who thus complain, and who, perhaps, are far from being enemies to religion, find, on a serious examination of their own hearts and lives, some irregularity in desire to be the cause of their discontent, and alleged punishment?

We are more disposed to lay down rules for the regulation of God's government, than to submit our will to it as he has settled it. If we do not now see the efficacy of the prayer which he has enjoined us to present to him, it may yet be producing its effect in another way. Infinite wisdom is not obliged to inform us of the manner, or the time, of his operations; what he expects of us is to persevere in the duty. The very obedience to the command is no small thing whatever be its imperceptible effects.

Under the apparent failure of our prayers, the source of our repinings must be looked for in the fact of our own blindness and imperfection; for the declarations of the Gospel are sure; their answer must be found in the grace of God in Christ Jesus, for his mercies are infallible. Wherever there is disappointment, we may be assured that it is not because he is wanting to us, but because we are wanting to ourselves.

The prophet's expression, 'the iniquity of our holy things,' will not be thoroughly understood except by those who thus seriously dive into the recesses of their own heart, feel their deficiencies, mark their wanderings, detect and lament their vain imaginations and impertinent thoughts. It is to be regretted that these worldly trifles are far more apt to intrude on us in prayer, than the devout affections excited by prayer are to follow us into the world. Business and pleasure break in on our devotions: when will the spirit of devotion mix with the concerns of the world?

You who lament the disappointment of your requests, suffer a few friendly hints.—Have you not been impatient because you receive not the things that you asked for immediately? How do you know, but that if you had persevered, God might have bestowed them? He certainly would, had He not in His wisdom foreseen they would not have been good for you; and, therefore, in His mercy withheld them. Is there not some secret, unsuspected infidelity lurking behind such impatience? Is it not virtually saying, there is no God to hear, or that he is unfaithful to his promises? For is it not absolute impiety to insinuate an accusation that the Supreme Judge of men and angels is capable of injustice, or liable to error? God has pleasure in the prosperity of His children. He neither grants nor denies any thing which is not accurately weighed and measured; which is not exactly suited to their wants, if not to their requests.

If we pray aright, it may please God, not only to grant that for which we pray, but that for which we do not pray. Supplicating for the best things as we before observed, we may receive inferior and unrequested things, as was the case with Solomon in his prayer for wisdom. God will not forget our labour of love. If he does not seem to notice it at present, he may lay it by for a time when it may be more wanted.

In prayer we must take care not to measure our necessities by our desires: the former are few, the latter may be insatiable. A murmur-

ing spirit is a probable cause why our petitions are not granted. He who murmurs, distrusts the truth of God; and from distrust to infidelity the distance is not great. The certain way to prevent our obtaining what we desire, or enjoying what we have, is to feel impatient at what we do not receive, or to make an improper use of what has been granted to our prayers.

Or you may perhaps address God with sinister and corrupt views; as if you had left his omniscience out of his attributes; as if he might be entrapped with the 'secret ambush of a specious prayer. Your design in the application of the boon you solicit may not be for his glory. It may be the prayer of ambition, cloaked under the guise of more extensive usefulness; it may be the prayer of covetousness, under the pretext of providing for your family. It may be the prayer of injustice, a petition for success in some undertaking for yourself, to the circumvention of another's fairer claim. God, in mercy to our souls, refuses the gift which would endanger them.

Thus, then, if we ask and receive not, because we ask deceitfully or blindly, we must not wonder if our prayers are not answered. Or if we obtain what we solicit, and turn it to a bad account, or to no account at all, we must not be surprised if Divine grace is withheld, or withdrawn.

The same ill results may be expected if we ask formally or carelessly. Who has not felt, that there is a kind of mechanical memory in the tongue which runs over the form, without any aid of the understanding, without any concurrence of the will, without any consent of the affections? For do we not sometimes implore God to hear a prayer, to which we ourselves are not attending? And is not this presumptuously to demand from him that attention, which we ourselves are not giving to our own requests, even while we are in the act of making them?

A mere superficial form, by lulling the conscience, hardens the heart. The task is performed; but in what manner, or to what result, is not enquired. Genuine prayer is the homage of the soul to God, and not an expedient to pacify Him.

If you observe the form, but forget the dispositions it is intended to produce, it is evident the end of such prayer is not answered. Yet be not so far discouraged by feeling no sensible effect from prayer as to discontinue it; it is still a right thing to be found in the way of duty.

But, perhaps, you neglect to implore the Spirit of Christ towards the direction of your prayers, and His intercession for their acceptance. As there is no other name through which we can be saved, so there is no other through which we can be heard: we must not sever his mediation from His atonement. All His divine offices are not only in perfect harmony, but in inseparable union.* Or, perhaps, you have used the name of the Redeemer for form's sake, or as an accustomed close to your petitions, without imploring his efficacious grace in changing your heart, as well as in pardoning your sins.

Perhaps you think it is a sufficient qualification for acceptable prayer, that you are always forming good intentions; now, though these make up the value of good actions, yet good intentions, not acted upon, when occasion invites and duty calls, will not lessen, but inflame the reckoning. For does it not look as if you had resisted the offer of that Holy Spirit, which had originally prompted the intention; and may it not induce Him to withdraw His blessed influences, when they have been both invited and rejected?

Do you never, by unwholesome reading, fill the mind with images unfavourable to serious exercises? The children of the pure and holy God should feed on the bread of their Father's house, and not on the husks of the prodigal.

Do you never use profanely or lightly that name which is above every name? He who made the ear, shall He not hear? and, if He has heard during the day His awful name used by the thoughtless as an expletive, or by the impious as an interjection, or by the presumptuous as an imprecation, will He in the morning be called on as a Saviour, and in the evening as an Intercessor?

But it cannot be too frequently repeated, that no profession of faith, however orthodox; no avowal of trust in Christ, however confident; no entreaty for the aid of the Spirit, however customary, will avail, if it be not such an influential faith, such a practical trust, such a living devotedness, as shall be productive of holiness of heart and life, as shall tend to produce obedience to the commands, and submission to the will of God. This is an infallible test, by which you may try every doctrine, every principle of the Gospel. We do not mean the truth of them, for that is immutable; but your own actual belief, your own actual interest in them. If no such effects are visible, we deceive ourselves, and the principles we profess are not those by which we are governed.

Prayer is so obviously designed to humble the proud heart of the natural man, by giving him a feeling sense of his misery, his indigence, and his helplessness, that we should be unwilling to believe, that even the proudest man can carry his pride to the Throne of Grace, except to supplicate deliverance from it: yet such a character is actually drawn by Him who knew the thoughts and intents of the heart of man; and a long consideration will teach us, that the 'two men who went up into the temple to pray' were not intended as individual portraits, but as specimens of a class.

The proud man does not, perhaps, always thank God that he is not guilty of adultery or extortion, to which vices he may have little temptation; nor does he glory in paying tithe and taxes, to which the law would compel him. Yet is he never disposed, like the Pharisee, to proclaim the catalogue of his own virtues? to bring in his comparative claims, as if it were a good thing to be better than the bad? Is he never disposed to carry in his eye, (as if he would remind his Maker of his superiority,) certain persons who are possibly less the objects of Di

* We observe with regret, that, in many public forms of prayer, the aid of his mediation is much more frequently implored, than the benefits of his death and merits. He is, indeed, our divine Intercessor, but his mere intercession is not the whole source of our dependence on Him.

vine displeasure than he, by his pride and selfishness, may have rendered himself; although his regularity in the forms of devotion may have made him more respectable in the world, than the poor reprobated being whom he praises God he does not resemble? It is the lowly abasement, the touching self-condemnation, the avowed poverty, the pleaded misery, of the destitute beggar that finds acceptance. It is the hungry whom God's mercy fills with good things, it is the rich in his own conceit whom His displeasure sends away empty.

Whenever you are tempted to thank God that you are not like other men, let it be in comparing your own condition with that of the afflicted and bereaved among your own friends; compare yourself with the paralytic on his couch; with the blind beggar by the way-side; with the labourer in the mine; think on the wreteh in the galleys; on the condemned in the dungeons of despotic governments. Above all, think, and this is the intolerable *acme* of sin in the inflictor, and of misery in the sufferer,—think on the wretched negro chained in the hold of a slave-ship! Think seriously on these, and put pride into your prayer if you can.—Think on these, not to triumph in your own superiority, but to adore the undeserved mercy of God, in giving you blessings to which you have no higher claim, and let your praise of yourself be converted into prayer for them.

For there are no dispositions of the heart which are more eminently promoted by prayer than contentment and patience. They are two qualities of the same colour, but of different shades, and are generally, when found at all, found in the same breast. Both are the offspring of genuine religion, both nurtured by cordial prayer. The cultivation of the one, under easy circumstances, prepares for the exercise of the other in more trying situations. Both emanate from the same Divine principle, but are drawn out by different occasions and exercised under varying circumstances.

Content is the tranquillity of the heart, prayer is its aliment: it is satisfied under every dispensation of Providence, and takes thankfully its allotted portion, never inquiring whether a little more would not be a little better; knowing that if God had so judged, it would have been as easy for him to have given the more as the less. That is not true content, which does not enjoy as the gift of Infinite Wisdom what it has, nor is that true patience, which does not suffer meekly the loss of what it had, because it is not His will that it should have it longer. The language of the patient man under trials is, It is the Lord. Shall a living man complain? is his interrogation. 'A good man,' says Solomon, 'is satisfied from himself.' Here the presumptuous might put in *his* claim to the title. But his pretension arises from his mistake, for his satisfaction is *with himself*, that of the Christian with Providence; it arises from the grace of God shed abroad in his heart, which is become a perennial spring of consolation and enjoyment; and which by persevering prayer, is indented into his very soul. Content knows how to want and how to abound; this is the language of equanimity: 'Shall I not receive evil from the hand of the Lord, as well as good?—This is the language of patience. Content is always praising God for what she possesses, patience is always justifying him for what she suffers. The cultivation of the one effectually prepares us for the exercise of the other. But these dispositions are not inherent in the human heart. How are they generated? By the influences of the Holy Spirit. How are they kept alive? By heart felt devotion.

Perhaps the impediment which hinders the benefit of prayer in characters apparently correct, may be the fatal habit of indulging in some secrect sin, the private cherishing of some wrong propensity, the fondly entertaining of some evil imagination. Not being accustomed to controul at other times, it intrudes when you would willingly expel it; for a guest which is unreservedly let in at other seasons, and cordially entertained, will too freqnently break in when you desire to be alone.

The Scriptures are explicit on this subject. It is not merely the committing actual sin that ruins the comfort growing out of prayer; the Divine prohibition runs higher; its interdiction is more intimately interior; it extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The door of heaven is shut against prayer under such circumstances. 'If I regard iniquity in my *heart*, the Lord will not hear me.' A cherished corruption in the mind is more likely to interpose between God and the soul, because it does not assume the shape and bulk of crime. A practical offence, the effect of sudden temptation, is more likely to be followed by keen repentance, deep self-abasement, and fervent application for pardon; whereas to the close bosom-sin, knowing that no human charge can be brought against it, the soul secretly returns with a fondness facilitated by long indulgence, and only whetted by a short separation.

It was, perhaps, this acute experimental feeling which led David to pray to be delivered from 'secret sins;' these, he was probably conscious had led to those 'presumptuous sins,' which had entangled his soul and embittered his life; and whose dominion he so frequently and fervently deprecates. This, it is to be feared, may be the case with some, whoso language and exterior cause them to be ranked with the religious; these are, at least, the dangers to which they are most exposed. It is, therefore, that our Lord connects, in indissoluble union, watching with prayer.

Perhaps when the conscience is more than usually awakened, you pray with some degree of fervour to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin. But if you stop here your devotion is most imperfect. If you do not also pray to be delivered from its power and dominion over your heart and life, you do not go much farther than the heathens of old. They seem to have had a strong feeling of guilt, by their fond desire of expiating it by their sacrifices and lustrations.

But such is the love of present ease, and the desire of respite, that you think, perhaps, it is better not 'to be tormented before the time.' How many now in a state of irreversible misery wish they had been tormented sooner, that they

might not be tormented forever! But with you it is not yet too late. With you the day of grace, which to them is over, is not yet past. Use it, then, without delay, instead of persisting in laying up fresh regrets for eternity.

But too many deceive themselves, by imagining, that when they have pronounced their prayer the duty is accomplished with the task; the occult medicine being taken, the charm is to work of itself. They consider it as a duty quite distinct and unconnected with any other. They forget that it is to produce in them a principle which is to mix with all the occurences of the day. Prayer, though not intended as a talisman, is yet proposed as a remedy. The effect of its operation is to be seen in subduing the passions, assisting to govern the temper, in bridling the tongue, in checking not only calumny, but levity; not only impure, but vain conversation.

But we have a wonderful talent at deceiving ourselves. We have not a fault for which we do not find an apology. Our ingenuity on this head is inexhaustible. In matters of religion men complain that they are weak; a complaint they are not forward to urge in worldly matters. They lament that their reluctance to pray arises from being unable to do what God, in his word, expects them to do. But is not this virtual rebellion, only with a smooth face and a soft name? God is too wise not to know exactly what we *can* do, and too just to expect from us what we *cannot*.

This pretence of weakness, though it looks like humility, is only a mask for indolence, and a screen for selfishness.

We certainly *can* refuse to indulge ourselves in what pleases us, when we know it displeases God. We *can* obey his commandments with the aid of the infused strength which He has promised, and which we *can* ask. It is not He who is unwilling to give, but we who are averse to pray. The temptations to vice are strengthened by our passions, as our motives to virtue are weakened by them.

Our great spiritual enemy would not be so potent, if we ourselves did not put arms into his hands. The world would not be so powerful an enchantress, if we did not assist the enchantment, by voluntarily yielding to it; by insensibly forsaking him who is our strength. We make apologies for yielding to both by pleading their power and our own weakness. But the inability to resist is of our own making. Both enemies are indeed powerful, but they are not irresistible. If we assert the contrary, is it not virtually saying 'Greater are they that are against us than He that is for us?'

But we are traitors to our own cause: we are conquered by our own consent; we surrender not so much because the conqueror is powerful, as because the conquered is willing.

Without diminishing any thing of *His* grace and glory to whom every good thought we think, every victory over sin we obtain, is owing, may it not add to our happiness, even in heaven, to look back on every conquest we here obtained by prayer over our grand spiritual enemy, every triumph over the world, every victory over ourselves? Will not the remembrance of one act of resistance then, far surpass every gratification now, which the three confederate enemies of our souls may present to us?

It is not merely by our prayers that we must give glory to God. Our Divine Master has expressly told us wherein His Father is glorified; it is 'when we bring forth much fruit.' It is by our works we shall be judged, and not by our prayers. And what a final consummation is it that obedience to the will of God, which is our duty here, shall be our nature hereafter! What is now our prayer shall then be our possession; there the obligation to obey shall become a necessity, and that necessity shall be happiness ineffable.

The various evils here enumerated, with many others not touched upon, are so many dead weights on the wings of prayer; they cause it to gravitate to earth, obstruct its ascent, and hinder it from piercing to the throne of God.

The Lord's Prayer.

CHAP. VIII.

It is not customary for kings to draw up petitions for their subjects to present to themselves; much less do earthly monarchs consider the act of petitioning worthy of reward, nor do they number the petitions so much among the services done them, as among the burthens imposed on them. Whereas it is a singular benefit to our fallen race that the King of kings both dictates our petitions, and has promised to recompense us for making them.

In the Lord's prayer may be found the seminal principle of all the petitions of a Christian, both for spiritual and temporal things; and however in the fulness of his heart he will necessarily depart from his model in his choice of expressions: into whatever laminæ he may expand the pure gold of which it is composed, yet he will still find the general principle of his own more enlarged application to God, substantially contained in this brief but finished compendium.

Is it not a striking proof of the divine condescension, that knowing our propensity to err, our blessed Lord should himself have dictated our petitions, partly perhaps as a corrective of existing superstitions, but certainly to leave behind Him a *regulator* by which all future ages should *set* their devotions; and we might perhaps establish it as a safe rule for prayer in general, that any petition which cannot in some shape, be accommodated to the spirit of some part of the Lord's prayer may not be right to be adopted.

The distinction between the personal nature of Faith, and the universal character of Charity, as it is exercised in prayer, is specifically exhibited in the two pronouns which stand at the head of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer. We cannot exercise faith for another, and therefore can only say *I* believe. But when we offer up our petitions, we address them to *our* Father, implying that he is the Author, Governor, and Supporter, not of ourselves only, but of his whole

rational creation. It conveys also a beautiful idea of that boundless charity which links all mankind in one comprehensive brotherhood. The plural *us*, continued through the whole prayer, keeps up the sentiment with which it sets out, tends to exclude selfishness, and to excite philanthropy, by recommending to God the temporal as well as spiritual wants of the whole family of mankind.

The nomenclature of the Divinity is expressed in Scripture by every term which can convey ideas of grandeur or of grace, of power or of affection, of sublimity or tenderness, of majesty or benignity; by every name which can excite terror or trust, which can inspire awe or consolation.

But of all compellations by which the Supreme Being is designated in his holy word, there is not one so soothing so attractive, so interesting, as that of FATHER; it includes the idea of reconcilement, pardon, acceptance, love. It swallows up his grandeur in His beneficence. It involves, also, the inheritance belonging to our filial relation. It fills the mind with every image that is touching, and the heart with every feeling that is affectionate. It inspires fear softened by love, and exhibits authority mitigated by tenderness. The most endearing image the Psalmist could select from the abundant store-house of his rich conceptions, to convey the kindest sentiment of God's pity towards them that fear Him, was that it resembles the pity of a 'father for his *own children*.' In directing us to pray to our Father, our Divine Master does not give the command without the example. He every where uses the term he recommends. 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth!' And in the 17th of St. John he uses this tender name no less than seven times.

'Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us,' was the ill-understood prayer of the inquiring disciples. To us this petition is granted before it is made. Does he not show himself to all as a Father, in the wonders of his creation, in the wonders of our being, preservation, and support? Has He not, in a more especial manner revealed Himself to us as a Father in the sublime wonder of His word, in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the perpetual gift of the Holy Spirit? Does He not show Himself our Father, if, when we have done evil, He withholds His chastening hand; if, when we have sinned, He still bears with us; if, when we are deaf to His call, He repeats it; if, when we delay, He waits for us; if, when we repent, He pardons us; if, when we return, He receives us; if, when in danger, He preserves us from falling; and if, when we fall, He raises us?

We have a beautiful illustration of the goodness of God as a merciful and tender Father in the deeply affecting parable of the Prodigal Son. Though the undone spendthrift knew that he had no possible claim on the goodness he had so notoriously offended, yet he felt that the endearing name of Father had an eloquence that might plead for forgiveness of his offence, though he feared, not for restoration to affection and favour. But while he only meekly aspired to a place among the servants, while he only humbly pleaded for a little of their redundant bread, he was received as a pardoned, reconciled, beloved child.

Our Lord's Introduction, 'Pray ye therefore after this *manner*,' neither forbids digression nor amplification. The recollection that His dwelling-place is in Heaven, is calculated to remind us of the immeasurable distance between the petitioner and his God, and to encourage us to communicate with the Father of Spirits: with Him who is 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders;' and which of His wonders is more astonishing than this inconceivably marvellous condescension?

Christianity, we must repeat, is a practical religion, and in order to use aright the prayer our Lord has given us, we must model our life by it as well as our petitions.

If we pray that the name of God may be hallowed, yet neglect to hallow it ourselves, by family as well as personal devotion, and a conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of public worship, we defeat the end of our praying, by falling short of its obligation.

The discrepancies between our prayers and our practice do not end here. How frequently are we solemnly imploring of God, that 'His kingdom may come,' while we are doing nothing to promote his kingdom of grace here, and consequently His kingdom of glory hereafter.

If we pray that God would 'give His Son the heathen for His inheritance,' and yet make it a matter of indifference, whether a vast proportion of the globe should live heathens or die Christians; if we pray that 'the knowledge of the Lord may cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea,' yet act as if we were indifferent whether Christianity ended as well as began at home. If we pray that 'the sound may go out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world,' and yet are satisfied to keep the sound within our own hearing, and the words within our own island, is not this a prayer which goeth out of feigned lips? When we pray that 'His will may be done,' we know that His will is, that 'all should be saved, that no one should perish.' When, therefore, we assist in sending the Gospel to the dark and distant corners of the earth, then, and not till then, may we consistently desire of God in our prayers, that 'His saving health may be known to all nations.'

In praying, therefore, that 'His kingdom may come, do we not pray that all false religions, all idolatrous worship may be universally abolished, and the kingdom of Messiah be established throughout the world?

If praying for our 'daily bread' is a petition expressing our dependence, it is also a petition of temperance. It teaches us to subordinate our desires after worldly things, and to ask for them in great moderation. It is worth observing, that requests for temporal blessings and spiritual mercies are so interwoven in this perfect form, that in repeating it, we cannot pray for our 'daily bread' without imploring 'forgiveness of our trespasses.'

'Deliverance from evil' is a petition of indefinite extent, and is closely connected with that which precedes it. God cannot 'lead us into

temptation,' but His Providence may lead us into situations which, acting on the corruption of our hearts, may eventually produce the evil we deprecate.

When we pray, therefore, not to be 'led into temptation,' we are asking of God to cure those sinful propensities which are likely to expose us to it, and to preserve us from those circumstances which, by subjecting us to difficulty and danger, may terminate in sin.

Temptation, in the language of Scripture, frequently implies probation; a trial sent in order to lay open our real character. Thus God, in tempting Abraham, gave occasion to that illustrious exemplification of faith and obedience in this devoted Patriarch. God is also said to try Hezekiah. This trial led him into the vain display of magnificence and wealth before the foreign ambassadors. The Searcher of hearts already knew this infirmity, yet it is said by the sacred historian, that 'God left him to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart.' Doubtless the public exposure of his pride was calculated to lead Hezekiah to subsequent repentance and humility; for, in spite of this error he was eminently conspicuous among the awfully few pious kings of Judah.

There is in the Lord's prayer a concatenation of the several clauses, what in human composition the critics call concealed method. The petitions rise out of each other. Every part also is, as it were, fenced round, the whole meeting in a circle; for the desire that God's name may be hallowed, His will be done, and His kingdom come, with which the prayer opens, is referred to, and confirmed by the ascription at the close. If the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are His, then his ability to do and to give, is declared to be infinite.

CHAP. IX.

The Lord's Prayer continued.—'Thy Will be Done.'

THE Holy Scriptures frequently comprise the essence of the Christian temper in some short aphorism, apostrophe or definition. The essential spirit of the Christian life may be said to be included in this one brief petition of the LORD'S PRAYER, 'THY WILL BE DONE.'

There is a haughty spirit which, though it will not complain, does not care to submit. It arrogates to itself the dignity of enduring, without any claim to the meekness of yielding. Its silence is stubbornness, its fortitude is pride; its calmness is apathy without, and discontent within. In such characters it is not so much the will of God, which is the rule of conduct, as the scorn of pusillanimity. Not seldom, indeed, the mind puts in a claim for a merit to which the nerves could make out a better title. Yet the suffering which arises from acute feeling is so far from deducting from the virtue of resignation, that when it does not impede the sacrifice it enhances the value. True resignation is the hardest lesson in the whole school of Christ. It is the oftenest taught and the latest learnt. It is not a task which, when once got over in some particular instance, leaves us master of the subject. The necessity of following up the lesson we have begun, presents itself almost every day in some new shape, occurs under some fresh modification. The submission of yesterday does not exonerate us from the resignation of to-day. The principle, indeed, once thoroughly wrought into the soul, gradually reconciles us to the frequent demand for its exercise, and renders every successive call more easy.

We read dissertations on this subject, not only with the most entire concurrence of the judgment, but with the most apparent conviction of the mind. We write essays upon it in the hour of peace and composure, and fancy that what we have discussed with so much ease and self-complacence, in favour of which we offer so many arguments to convince and so many motives to persuade, cannot be very difficult to practise. But to convince the understanding and to correct the will is a very different undertaking; and not less difficult when it comes to our own case than it was in the case of those for whom we have been so coolly and dogmatically prescribing. It is not till we practically find how slowly our own arguments produce any effect on ourselves that we cease to marvel at their inefficacy on others. The sick physician tastes with disgust the bitterness of the draught, to the swallowing of which he wondered the patient had felt so much repugnance and the reader is sometimes convinced by the arguments which fail of their effect on the writer, when he is called, not to discuss but to act, not to reason but to suffer. The theory is so just, and the duty so obvious, that even bad men assent to it; the exercise so trying that the best men find it more easy to commend the rule than to adopt it. But he who has once gotten engraved, not in his memory but in his heart, this divine precept, THY WILL BE DONE, has made a proficiency which will render all subsequent instruction comparatively easy.

Though sacrifices and oblations were offered to God under the law by His own express appointment, yet he peremptorily rejected them by his prophets, when presented as substitutes instead of signs. Will He, under a more perfect dispensation, accept of any observances which are meant to supersede internal dedication,—of any offerings unaccompanied by complete desire of acquiescence in his will? 'My son give me thine *heart*,' is his brief but imperative command. But, before we can be brought to comply with the spirit of this requisition, God must enlighten our understanding, that our devotion may be rational; He must rectify our will, that it may be voluntary; He must purify our heart, that it may be spiritual.

Submission is a duty of such high and holy import that it can only be learnt of the Great Teacher. If it could have been acquired by mere moral institution, the wise sayings of the ancient philosophers would have taught it. But their most elevated standard was low: their strongest motives were the brevity of life, the instability of fortune, the dignity of suffering virtue, things within their narrow sphere of

judging; things true, indeed, as far as they go, but a substratum by no means equal to the superstructure to be built on it. It wanted depth, and strength, and solidity, for the purposes of support. It wanted the only true basis, the assurance that God orders all things according to the purposes of his will for our final good; it wanted that only sure ground of faith by which the genuine Christian cheerfully submits in entire dependence on the promises of the Gospel.

Nor let us fancy that we are to be languid and inactive recipients of the Divine dispensations. Our own souls must be enlarged, our own views must be ennobled, our own spirit must be dilated. An inoperative acquiescence is not all that is required of us;—and, if we must not slacken our zeal in doing good, so we must not be remiss in opposing evil, on the flimsy ground that God has permitted evil to infest the world. If it be his will to permit sin, it is an opposition to his will when we do not labour to counteract it. This surrender, therefore, of our will to that of God, takes in a large sweep of actual duties, as well as the whole compass of passive obedience. It involves doing as well as suffering, activity as well as acquiescence, zeal as well as forbearance. Yet the concise petition daily slips off the tongue without our reflecting on the weight of the obligation we are imposing on ourselves. We do not consider the extent and consequences of the prayer we are offering, the sacrifices, the trials, the privations it may involve, and the large indefinite obedience to all the known and unknown purpose of Infinite Wisdom to which we are pledging ourselves.

There is no case in which we more shelter ourselves in generalities. Verbal sacrifices cost little, cost nothing. The familiar habit of repeating the petition almost tempts us to fancy that the duty is as easy as the request is short. We are ready to think that a prayer rounded off in four monosyllables can scarcely involve duties co-extensive with our whole course of being; that, in uttering them we renounce all right in ourselves; that we acknowledge the universal indefeasible title of *the blessed and only Potentate;* that we make over to Him the right to do in us, and with us, and by us, whatever he sees good for ourselves, whatever will promote His glory, though by means sometimes as incomprehensible to our understanding, as unacceptable to our will, because we neither know the motive, nor perceive the end. These simple words, THY WILL BE DONE, express an act of faith the most sublime, an act of allegiance the most unqualified; and, while they make a declaration of entire submission to a sovereign the most absolute, they are at the same time, a recognition of love to a Father the most beneficent.

We must remember, that in offering this prayer, we may, by our own request, be offering to resign what we most dread to lose, to give up what is dear to us as our own soul; we may be calling on our heavenly Father to withhold what we are most anxiously labouring to attain, and to withdraw what we are most sedulously endeavouring to keep. We are solemnly renouncing our property in ourselves, we are distinctly making ourselves over again to Him whose we already are. We specifically entreat Him to do with us what He pleases, to mould us to a conformity to His image, without which we shall never be resigned to his will; in short, to dispose of us as His infinite wisdom sees best, however contrary to the scheme which our blindness has laid down as the path to unquestionable happiness.

To render this trying petition easy to us, is one great reason why God, by such a variety of providences, afflicts and brings us low. He knows that we want incentives to humility, even more than incitements to virtuous actions. He shows us in many ways, that self-sufficiency and happiness are incompatible; that pride and peace are irreconcilable; that following our own way, and doing our own will, which we conceive to be the very essence of felicity, is in direct opposition to it.

Under the pressure of any affliction, *Thy will be done*, as it is the patient Christian's unceasing prayer, so it is the ground of his unvarying practice. In this brief petition he finds his whole duty comprised and expressed. It is the unprompted request of his lips, it is the motto inscribed on his heart, it is the principle which regulates his life, it is the voice which says to the stormy passions, 'Peace! be still!' Let others expostulate, he submits. Nay, even submission does not adequately express his feelings. We frequently submit, not so much from duty as from necessity; we submit, because we cannot help ourselves. Resignation sometimes may be mere acquiescence in the sovereignty, rather than conviction of the wisdom and goodness of God; while the patient Christian not only yields to the dispensation, but adores the dispenser. He not only submits to the blow, but vindicates the hand which inflicts it: 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways.' He refers to the chastisement as a proof of the affection of the chastiser. 'I know that in very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be afflicted. He recurs to the thoughtlessness of his former prosperity. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' and alludes to the trial less as a punishment than a paternal correction. If he prays for a removal of the present suffering, he prays also that it may not be removed from him, till it has been sanctified to him. He will not even part from the trial till he has laid hold on the benefit.

'Christianity,' says Bishop Horsley, 'involves many paradoxes, but no contradictions.' To be able to say with entire surrender of the heart, 'Thy will be done,' is the true liberty of the children of God, that liberty with which Christ has made us free. It is a liberty, not which delivers us from restraint, but which, freeing us from our subjection to the senses, makes us find no pleasure but in order, no safety but in the obedience of an intelligent being to his rightful Lord. In delivering us from the heavy bondage of sin, it transfers us to the 'easy yoke of Christ,' from the galling slavery of the world to the 'light burden of him who overcame it.'

This liberty, in giving a true direction to the affections, gives them amplitude as well as elevation. The more unconstrained the will becomes, the more it fixes on one object; once fixed on the highest, it does not use its liberty

for versatility, but for constancy; not for change, but fidelity; not for wavering, but adherence.

It is, therefore, no loss our interest than our duty, to keep the mind in an habitual posture of submission. 'Adam,' says Dr. Hammond, 'after his expulsion, was a greater slave in the wilderness than he had been in the inclosure.' If the barbarian ambassador came expressly to the Romans to negotiate from his country for permission to be their servants, declaring that a voluntary submission even to a foreign power, was preferable to a wild and disorderly freedom, well may the Christian triumph in the peace and security to be attained by a complete subjugation to Him who is emphatically called *the God of order*.

A vital faith manifests itself in vital acts.—'Thy will be done,' is eminently a practical petition. The first indication of the gaoler's change of heart was a practical indication. He did not ask, 'Are there few that be saved?' but 'What shall *I* do to be saved?'—The first symptom St. Paul gave of his conversion was a practical symptom: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*' He entered on his new course, with a total renunciation of his own will. It seemed to this great Apostle to be the turning point between infidelity and piety, whether he should follow his own will or the will of God. He did not amuse his curiosity with speculative questions. His own immediate and grand concern engrossed his whole soul. Nor was his question a mere hasty effusion, an interrogative springing out of that mixed feeling of awe and wonder which accompanied his first overwhelming convictions. It became the abiding principle which governed his future life, which made him in labours more abundant. Every successive act of duty, every future sacrifice of ease, sprung from it, was influenced by it. His own will, his ardent, impetuous, fiery will, was not merely subdued, it was extinguished. His powerful mind indeed lost none of its energy, but his proud heart relinquished all its independence.

We allow and adopt the term *devotion* as an indispensable part of religion, because it is supposed to be limited to the act; but *devotedness*, from which it is derived, does not meet with such ready acceptation, because this is a habit, and a habit involves more than an act; it pledges us to consistency, it implies fixedness of character, a general confirmed state of mind, a giving up what we are, and have, and do, to God. Devotedness does not consist in the length of our prayers, nor in the number of our good works, for, though these are the surest evidences of piety, they are not its essence.—Devotedness consists in doing and suffering, bearing and forbearing, in the way which God prescribes. The most inconsiderable duty performed with alacrity, if it opposes our own inclination; the most ordinary trial, met with a right spirit is more acceptable to Him than a greater effort of our own devising. We do not commend a servant for his activity, if ever so fervently exercised; in doing whatever gratifies his own fancy; we do not consider his performance as obedience, unless his activity has been exercised in doing what we required of him. Now, how can we insist on his doing what contradicts his own humour, while we allow ourselves to feel repugnance in serving our heavenly Master, when His commands do not exactly fall in with our own inclination?

Nothing short, then, of this sincere devotedness to God can enable us to maintain an equality of mind under unequal circumstances. We murmur that we have not the things we ask amiss, not knowing that they are withheld by the same mercy by which the things that are good for us are granted.—Things good in themselves may not be good for us. A resigned spirit is the proper disposition to prepare us for receiving mercies, or for having them denied. Resignation of soul, like the allegiance of a good subject, is always in readiness, though not always in action; whereas an impatient mind is a spirit of disaffection, always prepared to revolt when the will of the sovereign is in opposition to that of the subject. This seditious principle is the infallible characteristic of an unrenewed mind.

We must also give God leave, not only to take His own way, but His own time. The appointment of seasons, as well as of events, is His. 'He waits to be gracious.' If he delays, it is because we are not yet brought to that state which fits us for the grant of our request. It is not He who must be brought about, but we ourselves. Or, perhaps, He refuses the thing we ask, in order to give us a better. We implore success in an undertaking, instead of which, He gives us content under the disappointment. We ask for the removal of pain; He gives us patience under it. We desire deliverance from our enemies: he sees that we have not yet turned their enmity to our improvement, and he will bring us to a better temper, by further exercise. We desire him to avert some impending trial; instead of averting it, he takes away its bitterness; he mitigates what we believed would be intolerable, by giving us a right temper under it. How, then, can we say he has failed of his promise, if he gives something more truly valuable than we had requested at his hands?

A sincere love of God will make us thankful when our prayers are granted, and patient and cheerful when they are denied. Every fresh disappointment will teach us to distrust ourselves, and confide in God. Experience will instruct us that there may be a better way of hearing our requests than that of granting them. Happy for us that He to whom they are addressed knows what is best and acts upon that knowledge.

CHAP. X.

A slight scheme of Prayer proposed for young persons on the model of the Lord's Prayer.

Will the pious mother pardon the liberty here taken of suggesting the few following hints? Those who are aware of the inestimable value of prayer themselves, will naturally be anxious, not only that this duty should be earnestly inculcated on their children, but that they should be taught it in the best manner; and

such parents need little persuasion or counsel on the subject. Yet children of decent and orderly (I will not say of strictly religious) families are often so superficially instructed in this important business, that when they are asked what prayers they use, it is not unusual for them to answer, 'The Lord's Prayer and the *Creed*.' And even some who are better taught, are not always made to understand with sufficient clearness the specific distinction between the two, that the one is the confession of their *faith*, and the other the model for their *supplications*. By this confused and indistinct beginning, they set out with a perplexity in their ideas, which is not always completely disentangled in more advanced life.

An intelligent mother will seize the first occasion which the child's opening understanding shall allow, for making a little course of lectures on the Lord's Prayer, taking every division or short sentence separately; for each furnishes valuable materials for a distinct lecture. Children should be led gradually through every part of this Divine composition; they should be taught to break it into regular divisions into which, indeed, it so naturally resolves itself. They should be made to comprehend, one by one, each of its short but weighty sentences: to amplify and spread them out for the purpose of better understanding them, not in their most extensive and critical sense, but in their most simple and obvious meanings; for in these condensed and substantial expressions, as we have before observed, every word is an ingot, and will bear beating out; so that the teacher's difficulty will not so much be what she shall say, as what she shall suppress; so abundant is the expository matter which this succinct pattern suggests.

When children have acquired a pretty good conception of the meaning of each division, they should then be made to observe the connection, relation, and dependence of the several parts of this Prayer, one upon another; for there is great method and connection in it. A judicious interpreter will observe how logically and consequently one clause grows out of another, though she will use neither the word logically nor consequence; for all explanations should be made in the most plain and familiar terms, it being words, and not things which commonly perplex children, if, as it sometimes happens, the teacher, though not wanting sense, wants perspicuity and simplicity.

Young persons, from being completely instructed in this short composition, (which, as it is to be their guide and model through life, too much pains cannot be bestowed on it,) will have a clear conception, not only of its individual contents, but of Prayer in general, than many ever attain, though their memory has been, perhaps, loaded with long and unexplained forms, which they have been accustomed to swallow in the lump, without scrutiny and without discrimination.

I would have it understood, that by these little comments I do not mean that children should be put to learn dry, and, to them, unintelligible expositions; but that the exposition is to be colloquial. And here I must remark in general, that the teacher is sometimes unreasonably apt to relieve herself at the child's expense by loading the *memory* of a little creature on occasions in which far other faculties should be put in exercise. Children themselves should be made to furnish a good part of this extemporaneous commentary by their answers; in which answers they will be much assisted by the judgment the teacher uses in her manner of questioning. And the youthful understanding, when its powers are properly set at work, will soon strengthen by exercise, so as to furnish reasonable, if not very correct, answers.

Written forms of prayer are not only useful and proper, but indispensably necessary to begin with. But I will hazard the remark, that if children are thrown *exclusively* on the best forms, if they are made to commit them to memory like a copy of verses, and to repeat them in a dry customary way, they will produce little effect on their minds. They will not understand what they repeat, if we do not early open to them the important *scheme* of prayer. Without such an elementary introduction to this duty, they will afterwards be either ignorant, or enthusiastic in both. We should give them *knowledge* before we can expect them to make much progress in *piety*, and as a due preparative to it: Christian instruction in this resembling the sun, who, in the course of his communication, gives light before he gives heat. And to labour to excite a spirit of devotion without first infusing that knowledge out of which it is to grow, is practically reviving the popish maxim, that ignorance is the mother of Devotion, and virtually adopting the popish rule, of praying in an unknown tongue.

Children, let me again observe, will not attend to their prayers if they do not understand them; and they will not understand them, if they are not taught to analyse, to dissect them, to know their component parts, and to methodise them.

It is not enough to teach them to consider prayer under the general idea that it is an application to God for what they want, and an acknowledgment to Him for what they have. This, though true in the gross, is not sufficiently precise and correct. They should learn to define and to arrange all the different parts of prayer. And as a preparative to prayer itself, they should be impressed with as clear an idea as their capacity and the nature of the subject will admit, of 'HIM with whom they have to do.' His omnipresence is, perhaps, of all his attributes, that of which we may make the first practical use. Every head of prayer is founded on some great Scriptural truths, which truths the little analysis here suggested will materially assist to fix in their minds.

On the knowledge that 'God is,' that he is an infinitely holy Being, and that 'he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him,' will be grounded the first part of prayer, which is *adoration*. The creature devoting itself to the Creator, or *self-dedication* next presents itself. And if they are first taught that important truth, that as needy creatures they want help, which may be done by some easy analogy, they will easily be led to understand how na-

turally *petition* forms a most considerable branch of prayer; and Divine grace being among the things for which they are to petition, this naturally suggests to the mind the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And when to this is added the conviction which will be readily worked into an ingenuous mind that as offending creatures they want pardon, the necessity of *confession* will easily be made intelligible to them. But they should be brought to understand that it must not be such a general and vague confession as awakens no sense of personal humiliation, as excites no recollection of their own more peculiar and individual faults. But it must be a confession founded on self-knowledge, which is itself to arise out of the practice of self-examination. On the gladness of heart natural to youth, it will be less difficult to impress the delightful duty of *thanksgiving*, which forms so considerable a branch of prayer. In this they should be habituated to recapitulate not only their general, but to enumerate their peculiar, daily, and incidental mercies, in the same specific manner as they should have been taught to detail their individual and personal *wants* in the petitionary, and their *faults* in the confessional part. The same warmth of feeling which will more readily dispose them to express their gratitude to God in thanksgiving, will also lead them more gladly to express their love to their parents and friends, by adopting another indispensable, and to an affectionate heart, pleasing part of prayer, which is *intercession*. It will be needful to inform them that the omission of this important clause in the *Lord's Prayer*, arises from the Divine Intercessor not having then assumed his mediatorial office.

When they have been made, by a plain and perspicuous mode of instruction, fully to understand the different nature of all these; and when they clearly comprehend that *adoration*, *self-dedication*, *confession*, *petition*, *thanksgiving*, and *intercession*, are distinct heads, which must not be involved in each other; you may exemplify the rules by pointing out to them these successive branches in any well written form. It is hardly needful to remind the teacher that our truly Scriptural Liturgy invariably furnishes the example of presenting *every* request in the name of the great Mediator. For there is no access to the Throne of Grace, but by *that new and living way*. In the Liturgy, too, they will meet with the best exemplifications of prayers, exhibiting separate specimens of each of the distinct heads we have been suggesting.

But in order that the minds of young persons may, without labour or difficulty, be gradually brought into such a state of preparation as to be benefited by such a little course of lectures as we have recommended, they should, from the time when they were first able to read, have been employing themselves, at their leisure hours, in laying in a store of provision for their present demands. And here the memory may be employed to good purpose; for being the first faculty which is ripened, and which is indeed perfected when the others are only beginning to unfold themselves, this is an intimation of Providence that it should be the first seized on for the best uses. It should, therefore, be devoted to lay in a stock of the more easy and devotional parts of Scripture, especially the Psalms.* Children, whose minds have been early well furnished from these, will be competent at nine or ten years old to produce from them, and to select with no contemptible judgment, suitable examples of all the parts of prayer; and will be able to extract and appropriate texts under each respective head, so as to exhibit, without help, complete specimens of every part of prayer. By confining them entirely to the sense, and nearly to the words of Scripture, they will be preserved from enthusiasm, from irregularity, and conceit. By being obliged continually, to apply for themselves, they will get a habit in all their difficulties, of 'searching the Scriptures,' which may be hereafter useful to them on other and more trying occasions. But I would at first *confine* them to the Bible; for were they allowed with equal freedom to ransack other books with a view to get helps to embellish their little compositions, or rather compilations, they might be tempted to pass off for their own what they pick up from others, which might tend at once to make them both vain and deceitful. This is a temptation to which they are too much laid open, when they find themselves extravagantly commended for any pilfered passage with which they decorate their little themes and letters. But in the present instance there is no danger of any similar deception, for there is such a sacred signature stamped on every Scripture phrase, that the owner's name can never be defaced or torn off from the goods, either by fraud or violence.

It would be well, if in those Psalms which children were first directed to get by heart, an eye were had to this their future application; and that they were employed, but without any intimation of your subsequent design, in learning such as may be best turned to this account. In the hundred and thirty-ninth, the first great truth to be imprinted on the young heart, the Divine omnipresence, as was before observed, is unfolded with such a mixture of majestic grandeur, and such an interesting variety of intimate and local circumstances, as is likely to seize on the quick and lively feeling of youth. The awful idea that that Being whom they are taught to reverence is not only *in general* 'acquainted with all their ways,' but that He is 'about their path, and about their bed,' bestows such a sense of real and present existence on Him, of whom they are apt to conceive as having his distant habitation only in heaven, as will greatly help to realize the sense of his actual presence.

The hundred and third Psalm will open to the mind rich and abundant sources of expression for gratitude and thanksgiving, and it includes the acknowledgment of spiritual as well as temporal favours. It illustrates the compassionate mercies of God by familiar tenderness and exquisite endearment, as are calculated to strike

* This will be so far from spoiling the cheerfulness, or impeding the pleasures, of childhood, that the Author knows a lady, who, when a little girl, before she was seven years old, had learnt the whole Psalter through a second time; and that without any diminution of uncommon gaiety of spirits, or any interference with the elegant acquirements suited to her station.

upon every chord of filial fondness in the heart of an affectionate child. The fifty-first supplies an infinite variety of matter in whatever relates to confession of sin, or to supplication for the aids of the Spirit. The twenty-third abounds with captivating expressions of the protecting goodness and tender love of their heavenly Father, conveyed by pastoral imagery of uncommon beauty and sweetness: in short, the greater part of these charming compositions overflows with materials for every head of prayer.

Children who, while they were engaged in learning these Scriptures, were not aware that there was any specific object in view, or any farther end to be answered by it, will afterwards feel an unexpected pleasure arising from the application of their petty labours, when they are called to draw out from their little treasury of knowledge the stores they have been insensibly collecting; and will be pleased to find that, without any fresh application to study, they are now obliged to exercise a higher faculty than memory, they have lying ready in their minds the materials with which they are at length called upon to work. Their judgment must be set about selecting one, or two, or more texts, which shall contain the substance of every specific head of prayer before noticed; and it will be a farther exercise to their understandings to concatenate the detached parts into one regular whole, occasionally varying the arrangement as they like; that is, changing the order, sometimes beginning with invocation, sometimes with confession; sometimes dwelling longer on one part, sometimes on another. As the hardships of a religious Sunday are often so pathetically pleaded, as making one of the heavy burdons of religion; and as the friends of religion are so often called upon to mitigate its intolerable rigours, by recommending pleasant employment, might not such an exercise as has been here suggested assist, by varying its occupations, to lighten its load!

The habits of the pupils being thus early formed, their memory, attention, and intellect being bent in a right direction, and the exercise invariably maintained, may we not reasonably hope that their *affections* also, through Divine grace, may become interested in the work, till they will be enabled 'to pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also?' They will now be qualified to use a well-composed form, with seriousness and advantage; for they will now use it not mechanically, but rationally. That which before appeared to them a mere mass of good words, will now appear a significant composition, exhibiting variety, regularity, and beauty; and while they will have the further advantage of being enabled, by their improved judgment, to distinguish and select for their own purpose such prayers as are more judicious and more scriptural, it will also habituate them to look for plan, and design, and lucid order, in other works.

CHAP. XI.

Of Perseverance in Prayer and Praise.

A deep sense of his corruptions will power-

fully draw the real penitent to a humble avowal of sin; but it is to be feared that there are some, who, because they cannot charge themselves with flagrant offences, do not consider a contrite confession of the sins of the heart and of the daily life an indispensable part of their devotions. But God will charge many with sin who neglect to charge themselves. Did they attend to the remonstrances of a conscience not laid asleep by neglect, or quieted by palliatives, they would find, that, were the daily *omissions* alone, whether in prayer or conduct, of even their best days registered and presented to them, they would form no inconsiderable catalogue for repentance.

There are too many who do not consider that all sins are equally a breach of the Divine law. Without pretending to bring all sins, small and great, to one common level, we should remember that *all* sin is an offence against a gracious Father.

In that profoundly self-abasing prayer of David, after the commission of the two black offences which disgraced his otherwise exemplary life, though he deeply felt his barbarous treatment of his brave general, in first dishonouring his wife, and then exposing him to meet inevitable death in the fore front of the hottest battle, —yet, in praying to be delivered from this 'blood-guiltiness,' he bequeathed an important lesson to posterity, when, in his lowly prostration at the throne of God, his first cry was, 'Against *Thee*, *Thee* only, have I sinned, and done this evil in *Thy* sight, plainly declaring, that all sin is, in the first instance, a sin against God.

While the most worldly are ready enough to exclaim against notorious sins, or against any sins carried to the greatest excess, to smaller offences they contrive to be tolerably reconciled. They think the commission of these not inconsistent with the profitable use of prayer in their formal way of using this customary exercise.

They are also sufficiently lenient to certain degrees of great sins; and various are the modifications and distinctions in their logic, and not over-correct the gradations in their moral scale of degrees. They do not consider that it is the extirpation, and not merely the reduction, of any sin, which is to procure them that peace and comfort for which they sometimes pray, and which they wonder they do not receive as an answer to their prayers.

They forget that the evil of sin is not to be measured by its magnitude only, but by the spirit of disobedience which it indicates towards a generous Father,—a Father whose commands are all founded in mercy and love, and who considers every voluntary fault as no light offence when committed against supreme power exercised with perfect tenderness.

But it is their reluctance to part with the remaining degrees, their wish to retain these modified sins; it is their favourite reserves to which they still cling, that prevent that peace which is promised to the victory, I had almost said to the omnipotence of prayer.

For it is not so much the nicely measured quantity, as to the nature of sin which constitutes its malignity, and obstructs the benefit of

prayer. The inferior degree which is cherished, will, without earnest supplication to God, be ready to become the excess which is deprecated, whenever the appropriate temptation shall present itself. For, however our compassionate Father may pardon the unpremeditated fault, yet how can we expect Him to forgive any degree of sin that is allowed, that is even, in a certain measure, intended to be committed? Diminution, however, is a favourable step, if, by perseverance in prayer, it lead gradually to extirpation. And this naturally leads to the important subject of Perseverance in Prayer.

Prayer is an act which seems to be so prepared in the frame of our nature, to be so congenial to our dependent condition, so suited to our exigencies, so adapted to every man's known wants, and to his possibilities of wants unknown, so full of relief to the soul, and of peace to the mind, and of gladness to the heart; so productive of confidence in God, and so reciprocally proceeding from that confidence, that we should think, if we did not know the contrary, that it is a duty which scarcely required to be enjoined; that he who had once found out his necessities, and that there was no other redress for them, would spontaneously have recourse, as a delight, to what he had neglected as a command; that he who had once tasted the bounties of God, would think it a hardship not to be allowed to thank him for them; that the invitation to pray to his Benefactor, was an additional proof of Divine goodness, that to be allowed to praise Him for his mercies, was itself a mercy.

The Apostle's precept, 'Pray always,'—pray evermore, pray without ceasing, men ought always to pray,—will not be criticised as a pleonasm, if we call to remembrance that there is no state of mind, no condition of life, in which prayer is not a necessity as well as an obligation. In danger, fear impels to it: in trouble, we have no other resource; in sickness, we have no other refuge; in dejection, no other hope; in death, no other comfort.

Saint Paul frequently shows the word *prayer* to be a term of great latitude, involving the whole compass of our intercouse with God. He represents it to include our adoration of his perfections, our acknowledgment of the wisdom of his dispensations, our obligation for his benefits, providential and spiritual; the avowal of our entire dependence on Him, our absolute subjection to Him, the declaration of our faith in Him, the expression of our devotedness to Him; the confession of our own unworthiness, infirmities, and sins; the petition for the supply of our wants, and for the pardon of our offences; for succour in our distress; for a blessing on our undertakings; for the direction of our conduct, and the success of our affairs.

If any should be disposed to think this general view too comprehensive, let him point out which of these particulars prayer does not embrace; which of these clauses a rational, a sentient, an enlightened, a dependent being can omit in his scheme of devotion.

But as the multifarious concerns of human life will necessarily occasion a suspension of the exercise, the Apostle, ever attentive to the principle of the act, and to the circumstances of the actor, reduces all these qualities to their essence when he resolves them into *the spirit* of supplication.

To pray, incessantly, therefore appears to be, in his view of the subject, to keep the mind in an habitual disposition and propensity to devotion; for there is a sense in which we may be said to *do* that which we are *willing* to do, though there are intervals of the thought as well as intermissions of the act, —'as a traveller,' says Dr. Barrow, 'may be said to be still on his journey, though he stops to take needful rest, and to transact necessary business.' If he pause, he does not turn out of the way; his pursuit is not diverted, though occasionally interrupted.

Constantly maintaining the disposition, then, and never neglecting the actual duty; never slighting the occasion which presents itself, nor violating the habit of stated devotion, may, we presume, be called 'to pray without ceasing.' The expression 'watching unto prayer,' implies this vigilance in finding, and this zeal in laying hold on these occasions.

The success of prayer, though promised to all, who offer it in perfect sincerity, is not so frequently promised to the cry of distress, to the impulse of fear, or the emergency of the moment, as to humble continuance in devotion; it is to patient waiting, to assiduous solicitation, to unwearied importunity, that God has declared that he will lend his ear, that he will give the communication of his Spirit, that he will grant the return of our requests. Nothing but this holy perseverance can keep up in our minds a humble sense of our dependence. It is not by a mere casual petition, however passionate, but by habitual application, that devout affections are excited and maintained, that our converse with Heaven is carried on. It is by no other means that we can be assured, with Saint Paul that 'we are risen with Christ,' but this obvious one, that we thus seek the things which are above; that the heart is renovated, that the mind is lifted above this low scene of things; that the spirit breathes in a purer atmosphere; that the whole man is enlightened, and strengthened, and purified; and that the more frequently, so the more nearly, he approaches to the throne of God. He will find also that prayer not only expresses but elicits the Divine grace.

Yet do we not allow every idle plea, every frivolous pretence to divert us from our better resolves? Business brings in its grave apology pleasure its bewitching excuse.—But if we would examine our hearts truly, and report them faithfully, we should find the fact to be, that disinclination to this employment, oftener than our engagement in any other, keeps us from this sacred intercourse with our Maker.

Under circumstances of distress, indeed, prayer is adopted with comparatively little reluctance; the mind which knows not where to fly, flies to God. In agony, nature is no Atheist. The soul is drawn to God by a sort of natural impulse; not always, perhaps, by an emotion of piety, but from a feeling conviction that every other refuge is 'a refuge of lies.' Oh! thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, happy if thou art either drawn or driven

with holy David, to say to thy God, 'Thou art a place to hide me in.'

But if it is easy for the sorrowing heart to give up a world, by whom itself seems to be given up, there are other demands for prayer equally imperative. There are circumstances more dangerous, yet less suspected of danger, in which, though the call is louder, it is less heard; because the voice of conscience is drowned by the clamours of the world. Prosperous fortunes, unbroken health, flattering friends, buoyant spirits, a spring-tide of success,—these are the occasions when the very abundance of God's mercies is apt to fill the heart till it hardens it. Loaded with riches, crowned with dignities, successful in enterprise; beset with snares in the shape of honours, with perils under the mask of pleasures; then it is, that to the already saturated heart 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant,' is more in unison, than 'what shall I render to the Lord?'

Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws charity, followed by her lovely train, her forbearance with faults, her forgiveness of injuries, her pity for errors, her compassion for want. It draws Repentance, with her holy sorrows, her pious resolutions, her self-distrust. It attracts Faith, with her elevated eye, —Hope, with her grasped anchor,—Beneficence with her open hand,—Zeal, looking far and wide to serve,—Humility, with introverted eye, looking at home. Prayer, by quickening these graces in the heart, warms them into life, fits them for service, and dismisses each to its appropriate practice. Prayer is mental virtue; virtue is spiritual action. The mould into which genuine prayer casts the soul is not effaced by the suspension of the act, but retains some touches of the impression till the act is repeated.

When we consider how profusely God bestows, and how little He requires; that while He confers like Deity, He desires only such poor returns as can be made by indigent, mendicant mortality; that He requires no costly oblation; nothing that will impoverish, but, on the contrary, will inconceivably enrich the giver. When we consider this, we are ready to wonder that He will accept so poor a thing as impotent gratitude for immeasurable bounty. When we reflect, that our very desire to pray and to praise Him is His gift;—that His grace must purify the offering, before He condescends to receive it, must confer on it that spirit which renders it acceptable;—that He only expects we should consecrate to Him what we have received from Him;—that we should only confess, that of all we enjoy, nothing is our due;—we may well blush at our insensibility.

We think, perhaps, that had He commanded us 'to do some great thing,' to raise some monument of splendour, some memorial of notoriety and ostentation, something that would perpetuate our own name with His goodness, we should gladly have done it.—How much more when He only requires

'Our thanks how due!'

when He only asks the homage of the heart, the expression of our dependence, the recognition of His right!

But he to whom the duty of prayer is unknown, and by whom the privilege of prayer is unfelt, or he by whom it is neglected, or he who uses it for form and not from feeling, may probably say, Will this work, wearisome even if necessary, never know an end? Will there be no period when God will dispense with its regular exercise? Will there never be such an attainment of the end proposed, as that we may be allowed to discontinue the means?

To these interrogatories there is but one answer, an answer which shall be also made, by an appeal to the enquirer himself.

If there is any day in which we are quite certain that we shall meet with no trial from Providence, no temptation from the world, any day in which we shall be sure to have no wrong tempers excited in ourselves, no call to bear with those of others, no misfortune to encounter, and no need of Divine assistance to endure it, on that morning we may safely omit prayer.

If there is any evening in which we have received no protection from God, and experienced no mercy at his hands; if we have not lost a single opportunity of doing or receiving good, if we are quite certain that we have not once spoken unadvisedly with our lips, nor entertained one vain or idle thought in our heart, on that night we may safely omit to praise God, and to confess our own sinfulness; on that night we may safely omit humiliation and thanksgiving. To repeat the converse would be superfluous.

When we can conscientiously say, that religion has given a tone to our conduct, a law to our actions, a rule to our thoughts, a bridle to our tongue, a restraint to every evil temper, then, some will say, 'We may safely be dismissed from the drudgery of prayer, it will then have answered all the ends which you so tiresomely recommend.' So far from it, we really figure to ourselves, that if we could hope to hear of a human being brought to such perfection of discipline, it would unquestionably be found that this would be the very being who would continue most perseveringly in the practice of that devotion, which had so materially contributed to bring his heart and mind into so desirable a state, who would most tremble to discontinue prayer, who would be most appalled at the thought of the condition into which such discontinuance would be likely to reduce him. Whatever others do, he will continue forever to 'sing praises unto Thee, O Thou most Highest; he will continue to tell of Thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of Thy truth in the night season.'

It is true that while he considered religion as something nominal and ceremonial, rather than as a principle of spirit and of life, he felt nothing encouraging, nothing refreshing, nothing delightful in prayer. But since he began to feel it as the means of procuring the most substantial blessings to his heart; since he began to experience something of the realization of the promises to his soul, in the performance of this exercise, he finds there is no employment so satisfactory, none that his mind can so little do without; none that so effectually raises him above the world, none that so opens his eyes to its empty shadows, none which can make him

look with so much indifference on its lying vanities; none that can so powerfully defend him against the assaults of temptation, and the allurements of pleasure, none that can so sustain him under labour, so carry him through difficulties; none that can so quicken him in the practice of every virtue, and animate him in the discharge of every duty.

An additional reason why we should live in the perpetual use of prayer, seems to be that our blessed Redeemer, after having given both the example and the command, while on earth, condescends still to be our unceasing intercessor in Heaven. Can we ever cease petitioning for ourselves, when we believe that He never ceases interceding for us?

If we are so unhappy as now to find little pleasure in this holy exercise, that, however, is so far from being a reason for discontinuing it, that it affords the strongest argument for perseverance. That which was at first a form, will become a pleasure; that which was a burden, will become a privilege; that which we impose upon ourselves as a medicine, will become necessary as an aliment, and desirable as a gratification. That which is now short and superficial, will become copious and solid. The chariot wheel is warmed by its own motion. Use will make that easy which was at first painful. That which is once become easy will soon be rendered pleasant. Instead of repining at the performance we shall be unhappy at the omission. When a man recovering from sickness attempts to walk, he does not discontinue the exercise because he feels himself weak, nor even because the effort is painful. He rather redoubles his exertion; it is from his perseverance that he looks for strength. An additional turn every day diminishes his repugnance, augments his vigour, improves his spirits. That effort which was submitted to because it was salutary, is continued because the feeling of renovated strength renders it delightful.

But if prayer be so exhilirating to the soul, what shall be said of praise? Praise is the only employment, we had almost said, it is the only duty, in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise, of our affections. Prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed, sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praises exempt from our mixture of infirmity or alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude, unknown even to the angels. They are unfallen beings; they cannot say as we can, 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us.' Prayer is the child of faith; praise of love. Prayer is prospective; praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future blessings. Prayer points the only way to heaven, 'praise is already there.'

CHAP. XII.

On Intercessory Prayer.

As it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections as well as to *sanctify* them, the benevolent Christian is not satisfied to commend himself alone to the Divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God will overflow with love to his neighbour. All that are near to himself he wishes to bring near to God. He will present the whole human race as objects of the Divine compassion, but especially the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Religion makes a man so liberal of soul, that he cannot endure to restrict any thing, much less divine mercies, to himself: he, therefore, spiritualizes the social affections, by adding intercessory to personal prayer: for he knows that petitioning for others is one of the best methods of exercising and enlarging our own love and charity, even if it were not to draw down those blessings which are promised to those for whom we ask them.

It is unnecessary to produce any of the numberless instances with which Scripture abounds, on the efficacy of intercession: in which God has proved the truth of his own assurance, that 'his ear was open to their cry.' I shall confine myself to a few observations on the benefits it brings to him who offers it. When we pray for the objects of our dearest regard, it purifies passion, and exalts love into religion: when we pray for those with whom we have worldly intercourse, it smooths down the swellings of envy, and bids the tumult of anger and ambition subside: when we pray for our country, it sanctifies patriotism: when we pray for those in authority, it adds a Divine motive to human obedience: when we pray for our enemies, it softens the savageness of war, and mollifies hatred into tenderness, and resentment into sorrow. There is no such softener of animosity, no such soother of resentment, no such allayer of hatred, as sincere cordial prayer. And we can only learn the duty so difficult to human nature of forgiving those who have offended us, when we bring ourselves to pray for them to Him whom we ourselves daily offend. When those who are the faithful followers of the same Divine Master pray for each other, the reciprocal intercession delightfully realizes that beautiful idea of 'the communion of Saints.' There is scarcely any thing which more enriches the Christian than the circulation of this holy commerce; than the comfort of believing, while he is praying for his Christian friends, that he is also repaying the benefit of their prayers for him.

Some are for confining their intercessions only to the good, as if none but persons of merit were entitled to our prayer. Good! who is good? 'There is none good but one, that is God.' Merit! who has it? Desert! who can plead it? in the sight of God, I mean. Who shall bring his own piety, or the piety of others, in the way of *claim*, before a Being of such transcendant holiness, that 'the heavens are not clean in his sight?' And if we wait for perfect holiness as a preliminary prayer, when shall such erring creatures pray *at all* to HIM 'who chargeth the angels with folly?'

The social affections were given us not only for the kindliest, but the noblest purposes. The charities of father, son, and brother, were bestowed, not only to make life pleasant, but to

make it useful; not only that we might contribute to the present comfort, but to the eternal benefit of each other.

These heaven-implanted affections are never brought into exercise more properly, nor with more lively feelings, than in intercessory prayer. Our friends may have wants which we cannot remove, desires which we cannot gratify, afflictions which we cannot relieve, but it is always in our power to bring them before God; to pray for them whenever we pray for ourselves. This, as it is a most pleasant and easy, so it is an indispensable obligation. It is a duty which brings the social affections into their highest exercise, and which may be reciprocally paid and received.

The same Scriptures which expressly enjoin that supplication, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men, furnish also numerous examples of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. We need not dwell on the instance of the rain obtained by the prayers of Elijah, or the earlier availing intercessions of Moses, with other public deliverances effected in the same manner.

Though the perseverance of Abraham's prayer did not prevent the extermination of the polluted city, yet doubtless the blessing he solicited for it returned unto his own bosom, and the successive promises made by the Almighty Judge to the successively reduced number of the righteous, for whose sake the petition for preservation was offered, affords a proof of the Divine approbation and a striking encouragement to persist in the duty of intercessory prayer. The promise of God was withdrawn. The prayer was conditional, and could the petitioner have made up his very lowest compliment, the city had been saved. The interceding heart in any event is sure to gain something for itself.

Prayer is such an enlarger of the affections, such an opener of the heart, that we cannot but wonder how any who live in the practice of it, should be penurious in their alms; or, if they do give, should do it 'grudgingly or of necessity.' Surely if our prayer be cordial, we shall be more ready to assist as well as to love those for whom we are in the habit of making supplication to God. It is impossible to pray sincerely for the well-being of others, without being desirous of contributing to it. We can hardly conceive a more complete species of self-deception than that practised by an avaricious professor of religion, one who goes on mechanically to pray for the poor, whilst his prayer has neither opened his heart nor his purse. He may value himself on this, as on other instances of his ingenuity, in having found out so cheap a way of doing good, and go on contentedly, till he hears that tremendous sentence of exclusion, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.'

> O impudence of Wealth! with all thy store,
> How dar'st thou let one worthy man be poor?

O you great ones of the earth, whom riches ensnare and prosperity betrays—be largely liberal, even from self-interest. Not, indeed, expecting to make the liberality you bestow a remuneration for the devotions you withhold. Scatter your superfluities, and more than your superfluities, to the destitute, if not to vindicate Providence, yet to benefit yourselves. Not, indeed, to revive the old pious fraud of depending for salvation on the prayers of others; yet still you may hope to be repaid, with usurious interest, from the pious poor, by the very tender charity of their prayers for you. Their supplications may possibly be so heard, that you may at length, be brought to the indispensable necessity, and the bounden duty of praying for yourselves.

There is a generosity in religion. The same principle which disposes a Christian to contribute to the temporal interests of those he loves, inclines him to breathe his earnest supplication for their spiritual benefit. Not only does prayer for others promote natural affection, not only does it soften the heart of him who intercedes, but it is hoped that they for whom the intercession is made, may reap the benefit.

But our intercession must neither dwell in generalities for the public nor in limitations to the wants of our particular friends. The Christian is the friend of every description of the children of mortality. In the fulness of our compassion for the miseries of mankind, we pour out our hearts in prayer for the poor and destitute, and we do well. But there is another and a large class who are still more the objects of our pity, and consequently should be of our prayers. While we pray for those who have no portion in this world, do we not sometimes forget to pray for those who have their whole portion in it? We pray for the praying servants of God, but perhaps we neglect to pray for those who never pray for themselves. These are the persons who stand most in need of the mercy of the Almighty, and of our Christian importunity in their favour.

Is it not affecting, that even unto our devotions we are disposed to carry the regard we too highly indulge of the good things of this life, by earnestly imploring mercy upon those who want them; and by forgetting to offer our supplications in favour of those who are blinded by the too full enjoyment of them. If the one duty be done, should the other be left undone?

If we want an example of the most sublime kind of Charity, observe for what it is that the great Apostle of the Gentiles 'bows his knees to God' in behalf of his friends. Is it for an increase of their wealth, their power, their fame, or any other external prosperity?—No: it is that 'God would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man;'—it is, 'that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith;'—it is that 'they may be rooted and grounded in love,' and this to a glorious end, —'that they may be able with all Saints, to comprehend' the vast dimensions of the love of Christ;—that 'they may be filled with all the fulness of God.' These are the sort of petitions which we need never hesitate to present. These are requests which we may rest assured are always agreeable to the Divine will; here we are certain we cannot 'pray amiss.' These are intercessions of which the benefit may be felt, when wealth, and fame, and power, shall be forgotten things.

Why does Saint Paul 'pray day and night

that he might see the face of his Thessalonian converts?' Not merely that he might have the gratification of once more beholding those he loved,—though that would sensibly delight so affectionate a heart,—but 'that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith.'

These are instances of a spirit so large in its affections, so high in its object; of a man who had so much of Heaven in his friendships, so much of soul in his attachments, that he thought time too brief, earth too scanty, worldly blessings too low, to enter deeply into his petitions for those to whom time and earth, the transitory blessings of life, and life itself, would so soon be no more.

In exciting us to perpetual gratitude, the same Apostle stirs us up to the duty of keeping before our eyes the mercies which so peremptorily demand it. These mercies succeed each other so rapidly, or rather, are crowded upon us so simultaneously, that if we do not count them as they are received, and record them as they are enjoined, their very multitude, which ought to penetrate the heart more deeply, will cause them to slip out of the memory.

As to the commanded duty of praying for our enemies, the most powerful example bequeathed to us in Scripture, next to that of his Divine master on the cross, is that of St. Stephen. Even *after* the expiring martyr had ejaculated 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit,' he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' Let every instance of Roman greatness of mind, let every story of Grecian magnanimity be ransacked, and produce, who can, such another example. Theirs is tumour, this is grandeur; theirs is heroism, this is Christianity; they implored the gods for themselves, Stephen for his murderers.

In closing the subject of Intercessory Prayer, may the author be allowed to avail herself of the feeling it suggests to her own heart? and, while she earnestly implores that Being who can make the meanest of his creatures instrumental to His glory, to bless this humble attempt to the reader, may she, without presumption, intreat that this work of Christian charity may be reciprocal, and that those who peruse these pages may put up a petition for her, that, in the great day, to which we are all hastening, and to which she is so very near, she may not be found to have suggested to others what she herself did not believe, or to have recommended what she did not desire to practice? In that awful day of everlasting decision, may both the reader and the writer be pardoned and accepted, 'not for any works of righteousness which they have done,' but through the merits of the GREAT INTERCESSOR.

CHAP. XIII.

The Practical Results of Prayer Exhibited in the Life of the Christian in the World.

As the keeping up a due sense of religion, both in faith and practice, so materially depends on the habit of fervent and heart-felt devotion, may we be permitted, in this place, to insist on the probable effects which would follow the devout and conscientious exercise of prayer, rather than on prayer itself?

As soon as religion is really become the earnest desire of our hearts, it will inevitably become the great business of our lives; the one is the only satisfactory evidence of the other: consequently the religion of the heart and life will promote that Spirit of prayer by which both have been promoted.

They, therefore, little advance the true interest of mankind, who, under the powerful plea of what great things God has done for us in our redemption by His Son, neglect to encourage our active services in His cause. Hear the words of inspiration, 'Be not slothful;' 'run the race;' 'fight the good fight;' 'strive to enter in;' 'give diligence;' 'work out your own salvation;' 'God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love;' 'but when ye have done all, Ye are unprofitable servants, ye have done that which was your duty to do.'

But if, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, what shall we be if we have done nothing? Is it not obvious that the Holy Spirit, who dictated these exhortations, clearly meant that a sound faith in the word of God was intended to produce holy exertion for the advancement of His Glory? The activity in doing good of the Son of God was not exceeded by his devotion, and both powerfully illustrated his doctrines, and confirmed his divinity. Until then we make our religion a part of our common life, until we bring Christianity, as an illustrious genius is said to have brought philosophy, from its retreat to live in the world, and dwell among men; until we have brought it from the closet to the active scene, from the church to the world, whether that world be the court, the senate, the exchange, the public office, the private counting-house, the courts of justice, the professional departments, or the domestic drawing-room, it will not have fully accomplished what it was sent on earth to do.

We do not mean the introduction of its language, but of its spirit: the former is frequently as incompatible with public, as it is unsuitable to private business; but the latter is of universal application. We mean that the temper and dispositions which it is the object of prayer to communicate, should be kept alive in society, and brought into action in its affairs. That the integrity, the veracity, the justice, the purity, the liberality, the watchfulness over ourselves, the candour towards others, all exercised in the fear of the Lord, and strengthened by the word of God and prayer, should be brought from the retirement of devotion to the regulation of the conduct.

There may be a form of unfelt petitions, a ceremonious avowal of faith, a customary profession of repentance, a general acknowledgment of sin, uttered from the lips to God; but where is his image and superscription written upon the heart? Where is the transforming power of religion in the life?—Where is the living transcript of the Divine original? Where is that holiness to which the vision of the Lord is specifically promised? Where is the light,

and life, and grace of the Redeemer exhibited in the temper and conduct? Yet we are assured, that if we are Christians, there must be a constant aim at this conformity.

We should, therefore, endeavour to believe as we pray, to think as we pray, to feel as we pray, and to act as we pray. Prayer must not be a solitary, independent exercise; but an exercise incorporated with many, and inseparably connected with that golden chain of Christian duties, of which, when so connected, it forms one of the most important links. *They* will not *pray* differently from the rest of the world, who do not *live* differently.

But though we must not, in accommodation to the prevailing prejudices and unnecessary zeal against abstinence and devotion, neglect the imperative duties of retirement, prayer, and meditation; yet, perhaps, as prayer makes so indispensable an article in the Christian life, some retired contemplative persons may apprehend that it makes the whole; whereas prayer is only the operation which sets the machine going. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself. The only infallible incentive to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. It finds them work for every day in the week, as well as on Sundays.

The praying Christian, on going into the world, feels that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence—'I will *think* upon thy commandments to DO them.' What the Holy Spirit has so indissolubly joined, he does not separate.

As the lawyer has his compendium of cases and precedents; the legislator his statutes; the soldier his book of tactics; and every other professor his *vade mecum* to consult in difficulties; the Christian to whichever of the professions he may belong, will take his morning lecture from a more infallible directory, comprehending not only cases and precedents, but abounding with those seminal principles which contain the essence of all actual duty, from which all practical evidence is deducible. This spirit of laws differs from all other legal institutes, some of which, from that imperfection inseparable from the best human things, have been found unintelligible, some impracticable, and some have become obsolete. The divine law is subject to no such disadvantages: it is perfect in its nature, intelligible in its construction, and eternal in its obligation.

This sacred institute he will consult in the spirit of prayer, not occasionally, but daily. Unreminded of general duty, unfurnished with some leading hint for the particular demand, he will not venture to rush into the bustle, trial, and temptation of the day. Of this aid he will possess himself with the more ease, and less loss of time, as he will not have to ransack a multiplicity of folios for a detached case, or an individual intricacy; for, though he may not find in the Bible specific instances, yet he will discover in every page some governing truth, some rule of universal application, the spirit of which may be brought to bear on almost every circumstance; some principle suited to every purpose, and competent to the solution of every moral difficulty

Scripture does not, indeed, pretend to include technical or professional peculiarities, but it exhibits the temper and the conduct which may be made applicable to the special concerns of every man, whatever be his occupation. He will find in it the right direction to the right pursuit; the straight road to the proper end; the duty of a pure intention; and the prohibition of false measures to attain even a laudable object. No hurry or engagement will ever make him lose sight of that sacred aphorism, so pointedly addressed to men of business, 'He that *maketh haste* to be rich shall hardly be innocent.'—The cautionary texts which he admired in his closet, he will not treasure up as classical mottos to amuse his fancy, or embellish his discourse; but will adopt as rules of conduct, and bring them into every worldly transaction, whether commercial, forensic, medical, military, or whatever else be his professed object. He will not adjust his scale of duty by the false standard of the world, nor by any measure of his own devising; he has but one standard of judging, but one measure of conduct,—the infallible Word of God. This rule he will take as he finds it, he will use as he is commanded; he will not bend it to his own convenience; he will not accommodate it to his own views, his own passions, his own emolument, his own reputation.

He whose heart has been set in motion by prayer, who has had his spiritual pulse quickened by a serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures, will find his work growing upon him in regular proportion to his willingness to do it. He is diligently exact in the immediate duties of the passing day. Though procrastination is treated by many as a light evil, he studiously avoids it, because he has felt its mischiefs; he is active even from the love of ease, for he knows that the duties which would have cost him little, if done on the day they were due, may, by the accumulation of many neglected days, cost him much. The fear of this rouses him to immediate exertion. If the case in question be doubtful, he deliberates, he inquires, he prays; if it be clear and pressing, what his hand finds to do, he does with all his might, and in the calls of distress he always acts on his favourite aphorism,—that giving soon is giving twice.

Abroad how many duties meet him! He has on his hands the poor who want bread, the afflicted who want comfort, the distressed who want counsel, the ignorant who want teaching, the depressed who want soothing. At home he has his family to watch over. He has to give instruction to his children, and an example to his servants. But his more immediate, as well as more difficult work is with himself, and he knows that this exercise, well performed, can alone enable him wisely to perform the rest. Here he finds work for every faculty of his understanding, every conquest over his will, for every affection of his heart. Here his spirit truly labours. He prays fervently, but he has to watch, as well as to pray, that his conscience be not darkened by prejudice; that his bad qualities do not assume the shape of virtues, nor his good ones engender self-applause; that his best intentions do not mislead his judgment; that his

candour do not degenerate into indifferenee; nor his strietness into bigotry; that his moderation do not freeze, nor his zeal burn. He has to controul his impatience at the defeat of his most wisely eoneeived plans. He will find that in his best services there is something that is wrong, mueh that is wanting; and he feels, that whatever in them is right, is not his own, but the gift of God.

Is your Christian, then, perfeet? you will perhaps ask. Ask himself. With deep and sineere self-abasement he will answer in the negative. He will not only eonfess more failings than even his aeeusers aseribe to him, but he will own what they do not always eharge him with,—sins. He will aeknowledge that there is no natural difference between himself and his eensurer, but that through Divine graee, the one prays and struggles against those corruptions, the very existenee of which the other does not suspeet.

There is nothing more hnmbling to the confirmed praying Christian than that whilst in his happier moments he is able to figure to himself a eheering image of the glory of the Redeemer, the blessedness of the redeemed, the beauty of Christian perfeetion; to feel himself not only awakened, but exalted; not merely enlightened, but kindled; almost possessing, rather than antieipating Heaven;—while he is enabled, in a joyful measure, to meditate upon these things, to feel his mind ennobled, and his soul expanded by the eontemplation, yet to find how soon the bright ideas fade, the strong impression is effaeed, the heavenly vision vanished; he mourns to refleet, that he does not more abidingly possess in his heart, that he does not more powerfully exhibit in his conversation, more foreibly display in his life, that spirit of whieh his mind has been sometimes so full, his heart so enamoured, when prostrate before his Maker.

To his grief he finds that his most perfeet obedienee is ineomplete, that his warmest affeetions are often languid, perhaps his best intentions not realized, his best resolves not followed up. In this view, though he is abased in dust and ashes in looking up to God as the fountain of perfection, he is eheered in looking up to him also as the fountain of merey in Christ Jesus. He prays, as well as strives, that the knowledge of his own faults may make him more humble, and his sense of the divine mereies more grateful.

But he will feel that his faith, even though it does not want sineerity, will too frequently want energy. He has, therefore, to wateh against cold and heartless prayer; though, perhaps, the humility arising from this conseiousness is a benefit in another way. He feels it difficult to bring every 'thought into captivity to the obedienee of Christ,' yet he goes on eheerily, willing to believe that what may be diffieult is not impossible. He has to struggle against over anxiety for temporal things. He has to preserve simplieity of intention, eonsistency, and perseveranee. He has, in short, to watch against a long list of sins, errors, and temptations, whieh he will find heavier in weight, and more in number, the more closely he looks into his catalogue.

The praying Christian in the world has, above all, to wateh against the fear of man, as he may find it more easy to endure the eross than to despise the shame. Even if he have in a good degree eonquered this temptation, he may still find a more dangerous enemy in the applause of the world than he found in its enmity. An eager desire of popularity is, perhaps, the last lingering sin whieh eleaves even to those who have made a eonsiderable progress in religion, the still unextinguished passion of a mind great enough to have subdued many other passions.

The devout Christian endeavours to exemplify the emphatical deseription of the translated Saint in the Old Testament, 'he *walks* with God.' He does not merely bow down before his footstool at stated intervals: he does not eeremoniously address Him on great oeeasions only, and then retreat, and dwell at a distanee; but he *walks* with him; his habitual intercourse, his natural motion, his daily converse, his intimate eommunication, is with his Redeemer. He is still seeking, though it may be with slow and faltering steps, the things whieh are above; he is still striving, though with unequal progress, for the prize of his high ealling, he is still looking though with a dim and feeble eye, for glory, honour, and immortality; he is still waiting, though not with a trust so lively as to annihilate the distanee, to see his eternal redemption drawing nigh. Though his aims will always be far greater than his attainments, yet he is not diseouraged. His hope is above, his heart is above, his treasure is above: no wonder, then, that his prayers are direeted, and a large portion of his wealth sent forward thither, where he himself hopes soon to be. It is but transmitting his riehes of both kinds, not only to his future, but his everlasting home.

The grand danger of the Christian in the world is *from* the world. He is afraid of the sleek, smooth, insinuating, and not diseredituble viees; he guards against self-eomplaeeney. If his affairs prosper, and his reputation stands high, he betakes himself to his only sure refuge, the throne of God; to his only sure remedy, humble prayer. He knows it is more easy to perform a hundred right deeds, and to keep many virtues in exereise, than 'to keep himself unspotted from the world,' than to hold the things of the world with a loose hand. Even his best aetions, whieh may bring him most eredit, have their dangers; they make him fear that 'while he has a name to live, he is dead.'

He feels that if he had no sin but vanity, the eonseiousness of that alone, would be sufficient to set him on his guard, to quieken him in prayer, to caution him in eonduet.—He does not fear vanity as he fears any other individual viee; as a single enemy against which he is to be on the wateh, but as that vice whieh, if indulged, would poison all his virtues. Among the sins of the inner man, he knows that 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer.' When he hears it said of any popular, and espeeially of any religious eharaeter, 'he is a good man, but he is vain.' He says within himself, he is vain, and therefore, I fear he is not a good man. How many right qualities does vanity rob of their value, how many right actions of their reward!

Every suspicion of the first stirring of vanity in himself, sends him with deeper prostration before his Maker. Lord what is man! shall the praise of a fellow-creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose ashes, must soon be mingled with my own, which may even before my own be consigned to kindred dust, shall *his* praise be of sufficient potency to endanger the humility of a being, who is not only looking forward to the applause of those glorious spirits which surround the throne of God, but to the approbation of God himself?

When those with whom he occasionally mixes, see the praying Christian calm and cheerful in society, they little suspect the frequent struggles, the secret conflicts he has within. Others see his devout and conscientious life, but he alone knows the plague of his own heart. For this plague he seeks the only remedy; to prayer, that balm of hurt minds, he constantly repairs.

The confirmed Christian will above all labour most assiduously after that *consistency of character*, which is a more unequivocal evidence of high Christian attainment, than the most prominent great qualities, which are frequently counteracted by their opposites. This consistency exhibits a more striking conformity to the image of his Maker; as in the works of creation, the wisdom of the Supreme Intelligence is more admirable in the agreement and harmony of one thing with another, than in the individual beauty and excellence of each. It is more conspicuous, in the fitness and proportion of its parts relatively, than in the composition of the parts themselves. By this uniformity, the results of religion are the most beautifully exhibited in the Christian character.

When we reflect on the conflicts and the trials of the conscientious, watchful, praying Christian, we shall estimate aright the value of the consoling promises of the gospel. It is by these promises, applied through Divine grace to the heart, that the Christian is gradually brought to consider prayer, not merely as a duty, but to value it as a privilege; and the more earnestly he cultivates this spirit of supplication, the more deeply will it enable him to penetrate into the recesses of his own heart. The more he discovers the evils which he there finds, he will be so far from being deterred by the discovery from approaching to the fountain of mercy, that it will lead him to be more diligent, as well as more fervent in his application there. Nothing so faithfully reveals to us our spiritual exigencies, nothing can quicken our petitions for their relief so powerfully, as the conviction of their actual existence. In this conviction, in this earnest application, the Christian at length feels the efficacy of prayer in its consolations, its blessedness, its transforming power.

CHAP. XIV.

The Consolations of Prayer in Affliction, Sickness, and Death.

The Pagan philosophers have given many admirable precepts, both for resigning blessings, and for sustaining misfortunes; but, wanting the motives and sanctions of Christianity, though they excite much intellectual admiration, they produce little practical effect. The stars which glittered in their moral night, though bright, imparted no warmth. Their most beautiful dissertations on death had no charm to extract its sting. We receive no support from their most elaborate treatises on immortality, for want of Him who 'brought life and immortality to light.' Their consolatory discussions could not strip the grave of its terrors; for to them it was not 'swallowed up in victory.' To conceive of the soul as an immortal principle, without proposing a scheme for the pardon of its sins, was but cold consolation. Their future state was but a happy guess: their Heaven but a fortunate *conjecture*.

When we peruse their finest compositions, we admire the manner in which the medicine is administered, but we do not find it effectual for the cure, nor even for the mitigation of our disease. The beauty of the sentiment we applaud, but our heart continues to ache.

To this cold scepticism let us oppose the heart-consoling, exhilirating, triumphant *certainties* of Christianity. 'I *know* that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth—In my flesh I shall see God, whom mine eyes shall behold and not another'—'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'—Here is the true balm of Gilead—here is the healing cordial for every human woe!

The hair-splitting casuist does not directly say that pain is not an evil, but by a sophistical turn professes that philosophy will never *confess* it to be an evil. But what consolation does the sufferer draw from this quibbling nicety?

Christianity knows none of these fanciful distinctions. She never pretends to insist that pain is not an evil, but she does more; she converts it into a good. Christianity, therefore, teaches a fortitude as much more noble than philosophy, as meeting pain with resignation to the hand that inflicts it, is more heroic than denying it to be an evil.

'I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh unto me,' says the Almighty, by his prophet. We must, therefore, when we approach him in our devotions, frequently endeavour to warm our hearts, raise our views, and quicken our aspirations with a recollection of His glorious attributes,—of that omnipotence which can give to all without the least deduction from any, or from Himself; of that ubiquity which renders Him the constant witness of our actions: of that omniscience which makes Him a discerner of our intentions, and which penetrates the most secret disguises of our inmost souls; of that perfect holiness which should at once be the object of our adoration, and the model of our practice; of that truth which will never forfeit any of His promises; of that faithfulness which will never forsake any that trust in Him; of that love which our innumerable offences cannot exhaust; of that eternity which had place 'before the mountains were brought forth;' of that grandeur which has set His glory above the heavens; of

that long-suffering of God, who is strong and patient, and who is provoked every day; of that justice which will by no means clear the guilty, yet of that mercy which forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin; of that compassion which *waits* to be gracious; of that goodness which *leadeth* to repentance; of that purity which, while it hates sin, invites the sinner to return.

In seasons of distress and trial, whether from the loss of health, or under whatever other afflictive dispensation he may be struggling, the Christian will endeavour to draw consolation, by reviewing the mercies of his past life, and anticipating the glorious promises of the life to come. If previously accustomed to unbroken health, he will bless God for the long period in which he has enjoyed it. If continued infirmity has been his portion, he will feel grateful that he has had such a long and gradual weaning from the world. From either state he will extract consolation. If pain be new, what a mercy to have hitherto escaped it! If habitual, we bear more easily what we have borne long.

He will review his temporal blessings and deliverances; his domestic comforts, his Christian friendships. Among his mercies, his now 'purged eyes' will reckon his difficulties, his sorrows, and his trials. A new and heavenly light will be thrown on that passage, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' It seems to him as if hitherto he had only heard it with the hearing of his ear, but now 'his eye seeth it.' If he be a real Christian, and has had enemies, he will always have prayed for them; but now he will be thankful for them. He will the more earnestly implore mercy for them, as instruments which have helped to fit him for his present state. He will look up with holy gratitude to the Great Physician, who, by a Divine chemistry, in mixing up events, has made that one unpalatable ingredient, at the bitterness of which he once revolted, the very means by which all things have worked *together* for good; had they worked separately, they would not have worked efficaciously.

If our souls have been truly 'sanctified by the word of God and Prayer,' we shall, under the sharpest trials, be apt to compare our own sufferings with the cup which our Redeemer drank for our sakes; drank to avert the Divine displeasure from us. Let us pursue the comparative view of our condition with that of the Son of God. *He* was deserted in his most trying hour, deserted probably by those whose limbs, sight, life, he had restored; whose souls he had come to save. *We* are surrounded by unwearied friends; every pain is mitigated by sympathy; every want not only relieved, but prevented: the 'asking eye' explored; the inarticulate sound interpreted; the ill-expressed wish anticipated; the but suspected want supplied. When *our* souls are 'exceeding sorrowful,' *our* friends participate our sorrow; when desired to 'watch' with us, they watch, not '*one* hour,' but *many;* not 'falling asleep,' but both flesh and spirit ready and willing; not forsaking as in our 'agony,' but sympathizing where they cannot relieve.

The night also will be made to the praying Christian a season of heart-searching thought, and spiritual consolation. Solitude and stillness completely shut out the world, its business, its cares, its impertinences. The mind is sobered, the passions are stilled; it seems to the watchful Christian, as if there were in the universe only God and his own soul. It is an inexpressible consolation to him to feel that the one Being in the universe who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, is the very Being to whom he has free access, even in the most unseasonable hours. The faculties of the mind may not, perhaps, be in their highest exercise; but the affections of the heart, from the exclusion of distracting objects, more readily ascend to their *noblest* object. Night and darkness are no parasites; conscience is more easily alarmed. It puts on fewer disguises. We appear to ourselves more what we really are. This detection is salutary. The glare which the cheerful daylight, business, pleasure, and company, had shed over all objects, is withdrawn. Schemes, which, in the day, had appeared plausible, now present objections. What had then appeared safe, now, at least seems to require deliberation. This silent season of self-examination is a keen detector of any latent sin, which, like the fly in the box of perfume, may corrupt much that is pure.

When this communion with God can be maintained, it supplies deficiencies of devotion to those who have little leisure during the day; and by thus rescuing these otherwise lost hours, it snatches time from oblivion, at once adds to the length of life, and weans from the love of it.

If the wearied and restless body be tempted to exclaim, 'Would to God it were morning!' the very term suggests the most consoling of all images. The quickened mind shoots forward beyond this vale of tears, beyond the dark valley and shadow of death; it stretches onward to the joyful morning of the Resurrection; it anticipates that blessed state where there is no more weeping and no more night; no weeping, for God's own hand shall wipe away the tears; no night, for the Lamb himself shall be the light.

If humbling doubts of his own state depress the real penitent, what comfort may he not derive from the assurance, that the acceptable sacrifice to the God of love, is the troubled spirit, and the broken and contrite heart?

It is a further encouragement to Prayer to the dejected spirit, that the Almighty was not contented to show his willingness to pardon by single declarations, however strong and full. He has heaped up words, he has crowded images, he has accumulated expressions, he has exhausted language, by all the variety of synonymes which express love, mercy, pardon, and acceptance. They are graciously crowded together, that the trembling mourner who was not sufficiently assured by one, might be encouraged by another. And it is the consummation of the Divine goodness, that this message is not sent by his ambassador, but that the King of kings, the blessed and only Potentate, condescends himself to pronounce this royal proclamation, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!' Forgiving indeed, but in consonance

with his just demand of repentance and reformation, 'who will by no means clear the guilty.'

Refuse not, then, to take comfort from the promises of God, when, perhaps, you are easily satisfied with the assurance of pardon from a frail and sinful creature like yourself whom you had offended. Why is God the only being who is not believed? who is not trusted? 'O Thou that hearest Prayer, why unto Thee will not all flesh come?'

In the extremity of pain, the Christian feels there is no consolation but in humble acquiescence in the Divine will. It may be that he can pray but little, but that little will be fervent. He can articulate, perhaps, not at all, but his prayer is addressed to one who sees the heart; who can interpret its language; who requires not words, but affections. A pang endured without a murmur, or only such an involuntary groan as nature extorts, and faith regrets, is itself a Prayer. We have a striking instance of an answer to silent Prayer, in the case of Moses. In a situation of extreme distress, when he had not uttered a word, 'the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy crying.'

If, however, in the conduct of this nightly watching, and this nightly Prayer, our own stock of thought or expression be absolutely deficient, prophets and apostles will not only afford us the most encouraging examples, but the most profitable assistance. More especially the royal treasury of King David lies open to us; and whatever are our wants, there our resources are inexhaustible. The Psalms have supplied to all ages materials for Christian worship, under every supposable circumstance of human life. They have facilitated the means of negociation for the penitent, of gratitude for the pardoned. They have provided confession for the contrite, consolation for the broken hearted, invitation to the weary, and rest for the heavy laden. They have furnished petitions for the needy, praise for the grateful, and adoration for all. However indigent in himself, no one can complain of want, who has access to such a magazine of intellectual and spiritual wealth. These variously gifted compositions not only kindle the devoutest feelings, but suggest the aptest expressions: they invest the sublimest meanings with the noblest eloquence. They have taught the tongue of the stammerer to speak plainly; they have furnished him who was ready to perish for lack of knowledge, with principles as well as feelings; they have provided the illiterate with the form, and the devout with the spirit of prayer. To him who previously felt not his wants, they have imparted fervent desires; they have inspired the faint with energy, and the naturally dead with spiritual life.

The Psalms exhibit the finest specimen of experimental and devotional religion in the world. They are attended with this singular advantage, and this unspeakable comfort; that in them God speaks to us, and we speak to Him. 'Seek ye my face; Thy face, Lord will I seek.' This delightful interlocution between the king of saints and the penitent sinner; this interchange of character; this mixture of prayer and promise; of help implored, and grace bestowed; of weakness pleaded, and strength imparted; of favour shown, and gratitude returned; of prostration on one part, and encouragement on the other; of abounding sorrow, and overflowing mercy: this beautiful variety of affecting intercourse between sinful dust and infinite goodness, lifts the abased penitent into the closest and most sublime communion with his Saviour and his God.

The royal poet in these noble compositions has given us the most elevated character of Prayer, by showing us that supplication is the dialect of the poor in spirit; thanksgiving the idiom of the genuine Christian; praise, his vernacular tongue.

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How cheering under every species of distress to reflect, that our blessed Redeemer not only suffered for us upon the cross, but is sympathizing with us now! that 'in all our afflictions He is afflicted.' The tenderness of the sympathy seems to add a value to the sacrifice; while the vastness of the sacrifice endears the sympathy by ennobling it.

If the intellectual powers be mercifully preserved, how many virtues may be brought into exercise on a sick bed, which had either lain dormant, or been considered of inferior worth in the prosperous day of activity. The Christian temper, indeed, seems to be that part of religion which is more peculiarly to be exercised under these circumstances. The passive virtues, the least brillant, but the most difficult, are then particularly called into action. To *suffer* the whole will of God on the tedious bed of languishing, is more trying than to perform the most shining exploit on the theatre of the world; the hero in the field of battle has the love of fame, as well as patriotism to support him. He knows that the witnesses of his valour will be the heralds of his renown. The martyr at the stake is divinely strengthened. Extraordinary grace is imparted for extraordinary trials. His pangs are exquisite, but they are short. The crown is in sight; it is almost in possession. By faith 'he sees the heavens opened. He sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. But to be strong in faith, and patient in hope, in a long and lingering sickness, is an example of more general use, and ordinary application, than even the sublime heroism of the martyr. The sickness is brought home to our own feelings; we see it with our eyes; we apply it to our hearts. Of the martyr, we read, indeed, with astonishment: our faith is strengthened, and our admiration kindled; but we read it without that special appropriation, without that peculiar reference to our own circumstances which we feel in cases that are likely to apply to ourselves. With the dying friend, we have not only a feeling of pious tenderness; but here is also a community of interests. The certain conviction that his case must soon be our own, makes it our own now. Self mixes with the social feeling, and the Christian death we are contemplating, we do not so much admire as a prodigy, as propose for a model. To the martyr's stake we feel that we are not likely to be brought. To the dying bed we must inevitably come.

Accommodating his state of mind to the na-

ture of his disease, the dying Christian will derive consolation in any case, either from thinking how forcibly a sudden sickness breaks the chain which binds him to the world, or how gently a gradual decay unties it. He will feel and acknowledge the necessity of all he suffers to wean him from life. He will admire the Divine goodness which commissions the infirmities of sickness to divest the world of its enchantments, and to strip death of some of its most formidable terrors. He feels with how much less reluctance we quit a body exhausted by suffering, than one in the vigour of health.

Sickness, instead of narrowing the heart, its worst effects on an unrenewed mind, enlarges his. He earnestly exhorts those around him to defer no act of repentance, no labour of love, no deed of justice, no work of mercy, to that state of incapacity in which he now lies.

How many motives has the Christian to restrain his murmurs! Murmuring offends God, both as it is injurious to his goodness, and as it perverts the occasion which God has now afforded for giving an example of patience. Let us not complain that we have nothing to do in sickness, when we are furnished with the opportunity, as well as called to the duty of resignation; the duty, indeed, is always ours, but the occasion is now more eminently given. Let us not say, even in this depressed state, that we have nothing to be thankful for. If sleep be afforded, let us acknowledge the blessing; if wearisome nights be our portion, let us remember they are 'appointed to us.' Let us mitigate the grievance of watchfulness, by considering it as a sort of prolongation of life; as the gift of more minutes granted for meditation and prayer. If we are not able to employ it to either of these purposes, there is a fresh occasion for exercising that resignation which will be accepted for both.

If reason be still continued, yet with sufferings too intense for any devotional duty, the sick Christian may take comfort that the business of life was accomplished before the sickness began. He will not be terrified if duties are superseded; if means are at an end; for he has nothing to do but to die. This is the act for which all other acts, all other duties, all other means, will have been preparing him. He who has long been habituated to look death in the face, who has often anticipated the agonies of dissolving nature; who has accustomed himself to pray for support under them, will now feel the blessed effect of those petitions, which have been long treasured in heaven. To those anticipatory prayers he may, perhaps, now owe the humble confidence of hope in this inevitable hour. Habituated to the contemplation, he will not, at least, have the dreadful addition of surprise and novelty to aggravate the trying scene. It has long been familiar to his mind, though hitherto it could only operate with the inferior force of a picture to a reality. He will not, however, have so much scared his imagination by the terrors of death, as invigorated his spirit by looking beyond them to the blessedness which follows. Faith will not so much dwell on the opening grave, as shoot forward to the glories to which it leads. The hope of Heaven will soften the pangs which lie in the way to it. On Heaven then, he will fix his eyes rather than on the awful intervening circumstances. He will not dwell on the struggle which is for a moment, but on the crown which is forever. He will endeavour to think less of death than of its conqueror; less of the grave than of its spoiler; less of the body in ruins than of the spirit in glory; less of the darkness of his closing day than of the opening dawn of immortality. In some brighter moments, when viewing his eternal redemption drawing nigh, as if the freed spirit had already burst its prison walls, as if the manumission had actually taken place, he is ready exultingly to exclaim, 'My soul is escaped, the snare is broken, and I am delivered.'

Eternal things now assume their proper magnitude, for he beholds them in the true point of vision. He has ceased to lean on the world, for he has found it both a reed and a spear; it has failed, and it has pierced him. He leans not on himself, for he has long known his own weakness. He leans not on his virtues, for his renewed mind has shown him that they can do nothing for him. Had he no better refuge, he feels that his sun would set in darkness; his life close in despair.

He suffers not his thoughts to dwell on life. His retrospections are at an end. His prospects as to this world are at an end also. He commits himself unreservedly to his heavenly Father. But though secure of the port, he may still dread the passage. The Christian will rejoice that his rest is at hand; the man may shudder at the unknown transit. If faith is strong, nature is weak. Nay, in this awful exigence, strong faith is sometimes rendered faint through the weakness of nature.

At the moment when his faith is looking round for every additional confirmation, he may rejoice in those blessed certainties, those glorious realizations which Scripture affords. He may take comfort that the strongest attestations given by the apostles to the reality of the heavenly state were not conjectural. They, to use the words of our Saviour, spake what they knew, and testified what they had seen. 'I reckon,' says St. Paul, 'that the afflictions of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.' He said this *after* he had been caught up into the third Heaven; *after* he had beheld the glories to which he alludes. The author of the Apocalyptic vision having described the ineffable glories of the new Jerusalem, thus puts new life and power into his description, 'I John, *saw* these things and *heard* them.'

The power of distinguishing objects increases with our approach to them. The Christian feels that he is entering on a state where every care will cease, every fear vanish, every desire be fulfilled, every sin be done away, every grace perfected. Where there will be no more temptations to resist, no more passions to subdue; no more insensibility to mercies, no more deadness in service, no more wandering in Prayer, no more sorrow to be felt for himself, nor tears to be shed for others. He is going where his devotion will be without languor; his love without alloy; his doubts, certainty; his expectation, en-

joyment his hope, fruition. All will be perfect, for God will be all in all.

The period at length arrives when we must summon all the fortitude of the rational being, all the resignation of the devout Christian. The principles we have been learning, the prayers we have uttered, must now be made practical. The speculations we have admired, we must now realize. All that we have been studying was in order to furnish materials for this grand exigence. All the strength we have been collecting must now be brought into action. We must now draw to a point all the scattered arguments, all the several motives, all the individual supports, all the cheering promises of Christianity. We must exemplify all the rules we have given to others; we must embody all the resolutions we have formed for ourselves; we must reduce our precepts to experience; we must pass from discourses on submission to its exercise; from dissertations on suffering to sustaining it. We must heroically call up the determination of our better days. We must recollect what we have said of the supporters of faith and hope when our strength was in full vigour, when our heart was at ease, and our mind undisturbed. Let us collect all that remains to us of mental strength. Let us implore the aid of holy hope and fervent faith to show that religion is not a beautiful theory, but a soul-sustaining truth.

Let us endeavour without harassing scrutiny, or distressing doubt, to act on the principles which our sounder judgment formerly admitted. The strongest faith is wanted in the hardest trials. Under those trials, to the confirmed Christian, the highest degree of grace is commonly imparted. Let us not impair that faith on which we rested when our mind was strong, by suspecting its validity now it is weak. That which had our full assent in perfect health, which was then firmly rooted in our spirit, and grounded in our understanding, must not be unfixed by the doubts of an enfeebled reason, and the scruples of an impaired judgment. We may not be able to determine on the reasonableness of propositions, but we may derive strong consolation from conclusions which were once fully established in our mind.

Even if prayer were as worthless, with respect to present advantages, and religion as burthensome as some suppose, it would be a sufficient vindication of both that they lead to eternal bliss. Of the precise nature of that bliss, the Scripture account is calculated rather to quicken faith than gratify curiosity. There the appropriate promises to spiritual beings are purely spiritual. It is enough for believers to know that they shall be for ever with the Lord; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him. In the vision of the Supreme Good, there must be supreme felicity. Our capacities of knowledge and happiness shall be commensurate with our duration. On earth, part of our enjoyment—a most fallacious part—consists in framing new objects for our wishes: in heaven there shall remain in us no such disquieting desires, for all which *can* be found we shall find in God. We shall not know our Redeemer by the hearing of the ear, but we shall see Him as he is; our knowledge, therefore, will be clear, because it will be intuitive.

It is a glorious part of the promised bliss, that the book of prophecy shall be realized; the book of providence displayed, every mysterious dispensation unfolded, not by conjecture, but by vision. In the grand general view of Revelation, minute description would be below our ideas; circumstantial details would be disparaging; they would debase what they pretend to exalt. Those sublime negatives—'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him;' fill the soul with loftier conceptions of eternal joys than all the elaborate but degrading delineations which have been sometimes attempted. We cannot conceive the blessings prepared for us, until he who has prepared reveal them.

If, indeed, the blessedness of the eternal world could be described, new faculties must be given us to comprehend it. If it could be conceived, its glories would be lowered, and our admiring wonder diminished. The wealth that can be counted has bounds; the blessings that can be calculated have limits. We now rejoice in the expectation of happiness inconceivable. To have conveyed it to our full apprehension, our conceptions of it must then be taken from something with which we are already acquainted, and we should be sure to depreciate the value of things unseen, by a comparison with even the best of the things which are seen. In short, if the state of heaven were attempted to be let down to human intelligence, it would be far inferior to the glorious but indistinct glimpses which we now catch from the oracles of God, of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. What Christian does not exult in the grand outline of unknown, unimagined, yet consummate bliss —In THY presence is the fulness of joy, and at *Thy* right hand are pleasures for evermore!

ESSAYS

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

PRINCIPALLY DESIGNED FOR YOUNG LADIES.

"As for you, I shall advise you in a few words: aspire only to those virtues that are PECULIAR TO YOUR SEX; follow your natural modesty, and think it your greatest commendation not to be talked of one way or the other."—*Oration of Pericles to the Athenian Women.*

[First published in 1777.]

TO MRS. MONTAGU.*

MADAM,—If you were only one of the finest writers of your time, you would probably have escaped the trouble of this address, which is drawn on you, less by the lustre of your understanding, than by the amiable qualities of your heart.

As the following pages are written with an humble but earnest wish to promote the interests of virtue, as far as the very limited abilities of the author allow; there is, I flatter myself, a peculiar propriety in inscribing them to you, madam, who, while your works convey instruction and delight to the best informed of the other sex, furnish, by your conduct, an admirable pattern of life and manners to your own. And I can with truth remark, that those graces of conversation, which would be the first praise of almost any other character, constitute but an inferior part of yours.

I am, madam, with the highest esteem,
Your most obedient humble servant,
HANNAH MORE.

Bristol, May 20, 1777.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with the utmost diffidence that the following pages are submitted to the inspection of the public: yet however the limited abilities of the author may have prevented her from succeeding to her wish in the execution of her present attempt, she humbly trusts that the uprightness of her intention will procure it a candid and favourable reception. The following little Essays are chiefly calculated for the younger part of her own sex, who, she flatters herself, will not esteem them the less, because they were written immediately for their service. She by no means pretends to have composed a regular system of morals, or a finished plan of conduct: she has only endeavoured to make a few remarks on such circumstances as seemed to her susceptible of some improvement, and on such subjects as she imagined were particularly interesting to young ladies, on their first introduction into the world. She hopes they will not be offended if she has occasionally pointed out certain qualities and suggested certain tempers and dispositions, as *peculiarly feminine*, and hazarded some observations which naturally arose from the subject on the different characters which mark the sexes. And here again she takes the liberty to repeat that these distinctions cannot be too nicely maintained; for besides those important qualities common to both, each sex has its respective, appropriated qualifications, which would cease to be meritorious the instant they ceased to be appropriated. Nature, propriety, and custom, have prescribed certain bounds to each; bounds which the prudent and the candid will never attempt to break down; and indeed it would be highly impolitic to annihilate distinctions from which each acquires excellence, and to attempt innovations by which both would be losers.

Women therefore never understand their own interests so little, as when they affect those qualities and accomplishments, from the want of which they derive their highest merit. "The *porcelain* clay of human kind," says an admired writer, speaking of the sex: greater delicacy evidently implies greater fragility; and this weakness, natural and moral, clearly points out the necessity of a superior degree of caution, retirement, and reserve.

If the author may be allowed to keep up the allusion of the poet just quoted, she would ask if we do not put the finest vases and the costliest images in places of the greatest security, and most remote from any probability of accident or destruction? By being so situated, they find their protection in their weakness, and their safety in their delicacy. This metaphor is far from being used with a design of placing young ladies in a trival, unimportant light; it is only

* This ingenious lady's maiden name was Robinson, and her brother was the eccentric Lord Rokeby. She died in 1800, having been a widow many years. Her correspondence exhibits abundant proof of the goodness of her heart, as her "Essay on Shakspeare" does of taste and accomplishments.—ED.

introduced to insinuate, that where there is more beauty and more weakness, there should be greater circumspection and superior prudence.

Men, on the contrary, are formed for the more public exhibitions on the great theatre of human life. Like the stronger and more substantial wares, they derive no injury, and lose no polish, by being always exposed, and engaged in the constant commerce of the world. It is their proper element, where they respire their natural air, and exert their noblest powers, in situations which call them into action. They were intended by Providence for the bustling scenes of life; to appear terrible in arms, useful in commerce, shining in counsels.

The author fears it will be hazarding a very bold remark, in the opinion of many ladies, when she adds, that the female mind, in general, does not appear capable of attaining so high a degree of perfection in science as the male. Yet she hopes to be forgiven when she observes also, that as it does not seem to derive the chief portion of its excellence from extraordinary abilities of this kind, it is not at all lessened by the imputation of not possessing them. It is readily allowed that the sex have lively imaginations, and those exquisite perceptions of the beautiful and defective, which come under the denomination of taste. But pretensions to that strength of intellect which is requisite to penetrate into the abstruser walks of literature, it is presumed they will readily relinquish. There are green pastures, and pleasant valleys, where they may wander with safety to themselves, and delight to others. They may cultivate the roses of imagination, and the valuable fruits of morals and criticism; but the steeps of Parnassus few, comparatively, have attempted to scale with success. And when it is considered, that many languages and many sciences must contribute to the perfection of poetical composition, it will appear less strange. The lofty epic, the pointed satire, and the more daring and successful flights of the tragic muse, seem reserved for the bold adventurers of the other sex.

Nor does this assertion, it is apprehended, at all injure the interests of the women; they have other pretensions on which to value themselves, and other qualities much better calculated to answer their particular purposes. We are enamoured of the soft strains of the Sicilian and the Mantuan muse,* while to the sweet notes of the pastoral reed, they sing the contentions of the shepherds, the blessings of love, or the innocent delights of rural life. Has it ever been ascribed to them as a defect that their eclogues do not treat of active scenes, of busy cities, and of wasting war? No: their simplicity is their perfection, and they are only blamed when they have too little of it.

On the other hand, the lofty bards who strung their bolder harps to higher measures and sung the "wrath of Peleus' son," and "man's first disobedience,"† have never been censured for want of sweetness and refinement. The sublime, the nervous, and the masculine, characterize their compositions; as the beautiful, the soft, and the delicate, mark those of the others. Grandeur, dignity, and force, distinguish the one species; ease, simplicity, and purity, the other. Both shine from their native, distinct, unborrowed merits, not from those which are foreign, adventitious, and unnatural. Yet those excellences which make up the essential and constituent parts of poetry, they have in common.

Women have generally quicker perceptions; men have juster sentiments.—Women consider how things may be prettily said; men, how they may be properly said. In women (young ones at least), speaking accompanies and sometimes precedes reflection; in men, reflection is the antecedent.—Women speak to shine or to please; men, to convince or confute.—Women admire what is brilliant; men, what is solid.—Women prefer an extemporaneous sally of wit, or a sparkling effusion of fancy, before the most accurate reasoning, or the most laborious investigation of facts.—In literary composition, women are pleased with point, turn, and antithesis; men, with observation, and a just deduction of effects from their causes.—Women are fond of incident, men of argument.—Women admire passionately, men approve cautiously.—One sex will think they betray a want of feeling to be moderate in their applause, the other will be afraid of exposing a want of judgment by being in raptures with any thing.—Men refuse to give way to the emotions they actually feel, while women sometimes affect to be transported beyond what the occasion will justify.

As a farther confirmation of what has been advanced on the different bent of the understanding in the sexes; it may be observed, that we have heard of many female wits, but never of one female logician—of many admirable writers of memoirs, but never of one chronologer.—In the boundless and aerial regions of romance, and in that fashionable species of composition which succeeded it, and which carries a nearer approximation to the manners of the world, the women cannot be excelled: this imaginary soil they have a peculiar talent for cultivating, because here,

"Invention labours more, and judgment less."

The merit of this kind of writing consists in the *vraisemblance* to real life as to the events themselves, with a certain elevation in the narrative, which places them, if not above what is natural, yet above what is common. It farther consists in the art of interesting the tender feelings by a pathetic representation of those minute, endearing, domestic circumstances, which take captive the soul before it has time to shield itself with the armour of reflection. To amuse rather than to instruct, or to instruct indirectly by short inferences, drawn from a long concate-

* Theocritus in his Idyls, and Virgil in his Bucolics † Homer in the Iliad, and Milton in Paradise Lost.

nation of circumstances, is at once the business of this sort of composition, and one of the characteristics of female genius.*

In short, it appears that the mind in each sex has some natural kind of bias, which constitutes a distinction of character; and that the happiness of both depends, in a great measure, on the preservation and observance of this distinction. For where would be the superior pleasure and satisfaction resulting from mixed conversation, if this difference were abolished? If the qualities of both were invariably and exactly the same, no benefit or entertainment would arise from the tedious and insipid uniformity of such an intercourse; whereas considerable advantages are reaped from a select society of both sexes. The rough angles and asperities of male manners are imperceptibly filed, and gradually worn smooth, by the polishing of female conversation, and the refining of female taste; while the ideas of women acquire strength and solidity, by their associating with sensible, intelligent, and judicious men.

On the whole (even if fame be the object of pursuit), is it not better to succeed as women, than to fail as men? to shine by walking honourably in the road which nature, custom, and education seem to have marked out, rather than to counteract them all, by moving awkwardly in a path diametrically opposite? to be good originals, rather than bad imitators?—in a word, to be excellent women, rather than indifferent men?

ON DISSIPATION.

Doglie certe Allegrezze incerte!—PETRARCA.

As an argument in favour of modern manners, it has been pleaded, that the softer vices of luxury and dissipation belong rather to gentle and yielding tempers, than to such as are rugged and ferocious: that they are vices which increase civilization, and tend to promote refinement, and the cultivation of humanity.

But this is an assertion, the truth of which the experience of all ages contradicts. Nero was not less a tyrant for being a fiddler: he† who wished the whole Roman people had but one neck, that he might despatch them at a blow, was himself the most debauched man in Rome; and Sydney and Russel were condemned to bleed under the most barbarous, though most dissipated and voluptuous reign, that ever disgraced the annals of Britain.

The love of dissipation is, I believe, allowed to be the reigning evil of the present day. It is an evil which many content themselves with regretting, without seeking to redress. A dissipated life is censured in the very act of dissipation, and prodigality of time is as gravely declaimed against at the card-table as in the pulpit.

The lover of dancing censures the amusements of the theatre for their dulness, and the gamester blames them both for their levity. She whose whole soul is swallowed up in "opera ecstasies," is astonished that her acquaintance can spend whole nights in preying, like harpies, on the fortunes of their fellow-creatures: while the grave, sober sinner, who passes her pale and anxious vigils in this fashionable sort of pillaging, is no less surprised how the other can waste her precious time in hearing sounds for which she has no taste, in a language she does not understand.

In short, every one seems convinced that the evil so much complained of does really exist somewhere, though all are inwardly persuaded that it is not with themselves. All desire a general reformation, but few will listen to proposals of particular amendment; the body must be restored, but each limb begs to remain as it is; and accusations which concern all, will be likely to affect none. They think that sin, like matter, is divisible, and that what is scattered among so many, cannot materially affect any one; and thus individuals contribute separately to that evil which they in general lament.

The prevailing manners of an age depend more than we are aware, or are willing to allow, on the conduct of the women; this is one of the principal hinges on which the great machine of human society turns. Those who allow the influence which female graces have, in contributing to polish the manners of men, would do well to reflect how great an influence female morals must also have on their conduct. How much, then, is it to be regretted, that the British ladies should ever sit down contented to polish, when they are able to reform; to entertain, when they might instruct; and to dazzle for an hour, when they are candidates for eternity!

Under the dispensation of Mahomet's law, indeed, these mental excellences cannot be expected, because the women are shut out from all opportunities of instruction, and excluded from the endearing pleasures of a delightful and equal society; and, as a charming poet sings, are taught to believe, that

> "————For their inferior natures,
> Form'd to delight, and happy by delighting,
> Heav'n has reserv'd no future paradise,
> But bids them rove the paths of bliss, secure
> Of total death, and careless of hereafter."
>
> *Dr. Johnson's Irene.*

These act consistently in studying none but exterior graces, in cultivating only personal attractions, and in trying to lighten the intolerable burden of time, by the most frivolous and vain

* The author does not apprehend it makes against her GENERAL position, that this nation can boast a female critic, poet, historian, linguist, philosopher, and moralist, equal to most of the other sex. To these particular instances others might be adduced; but it is presumed, that they only stand as exceptions against the rule, without tending to invalidate the rule itself.

[The ladies here indirectly complimented, appear to be Mrs. Montagu; Miss Aikin, afterward Mrs. Barbaud; Mrs. Macaulay Mrs Elizabeth Carter; Mrs. Chapone; and perhaps Mrs Lennox.]—ED.

† The Emperor Caligula.

amusements. They act in consequence of their own blind belief, and the tyranny of their despotic masters; for they have neither the freedom of a present choice, nor the prospect of a future being.

But in this land of civil and religious liberty, where there is as little despotism exercised over the minds as over the persons of women, they have every liberty of choice, and every opportunity of improvement; and how greatly does this increase their obligation to be exemplary in their general conduct, attentive to the government of their families, and instrumental to the good order of society!

She who is at a loss to find amusements at home, can no longer apologize for her dissipation abroad, by saying she is deprived of the benefit and the pleasure of books; and she who regrets being doomed to a state of dark and gloomy ignorance, by the injustice or tyranny of the men, complains of an evil which does not exist.

It is a question frequently in the mouths of illiterate and dissipated females—"What good is there in reading? to what end does it conduce?" It is, however, too obvious to need insisting on, that unless perverted, as the best things may be, reading answers many excellent purposes besides the great leading one, and is perhaps the safest remedy for dissipation. She who dedicates a portion of her leisure to useful reading, feels her mind in a constant progressive state of improvement, while the mind of a dissipated woman is continually losing ground. An active spirit rejoiceth, like the sun, to run his daily course; while indolence, like the dial of Ahaz, goes backwards. The advantages which the understanding receives from polite literature, it is not here necessary to enumerate; its effects on the moral temper is the present object of consideration. The remark may perhaps be thought too strong, but I believe it is true, that next to religious influences, a habit of study is the most probable preservative of the virtue of young persons. Those who cultivate letters have rarely a strong passion for promiscuous visiting, or dissipated society; study, therefore, induces a relish for domestic life, the most desirable temper in the world for women. Study, as it rescues the mind from an inordinate fondness for gaming, dress, and public amusements, is an economical propensity; for a lady may read at much less expense than she can play at cards; as it requires some application, it gives the mind a habit of industry; as it is a relief against that mental disease, which the French emphatically call *ennui*, it cannot fail of being beneficial to the temper and spirits, I mean in the moderate degree in which ladies are supposed to use it; as an enemy to indolence, it becomes a social virtue; as it demands the full exertion of our talents, it grows a rational duty; and when directed to the knowledge of the Supreme Being and his laws, it rises into an act of religion.

The rage for reformation commonly shows itself in a violent zeal for suppressing what is wrong, rather than in a prudent attention to establish what is right; but we shall never obtain a fair garden merely by rooting up weeds; we must also plant flowers; for the natural richness of the soil we have been clearing will not suffer it to lie barren; but whether it shall be vainly or beneficially prolific, depends on the culture. What the present age has gained on one side, by a more enlarged and liberal way of thinking, seems to be lost on the other, by excessive freedom and unbounded indulgence. Knowledge is not, as heretofore, confined to the dull cloister, or the gloomy college; but disseminated, to a certain degree, among both sexes, and almost all ranks. The only misfortune is, that these opportunities do not seem to be so wisely improved, or turned to so good an account, as might be wished. Books of a pernicious, idle, and frivolous sort are too much multiplied; and it is from the very redundancy of them that true knowledge is so scarce, and the habit of dissipation so much increased.

It has been remarked, that the prevailing character of the present age is not that of gross immorality; but if this is meant of those in the higher walks of life, it is easy to discern, that there can be but little merit in abstaining from crimes which there is but little temptation to commit. It is, however, to be feared, that a gradual defection from piety will in time draw after it all the bad consequences of more active vice; for whether mounds and fences are suddenly destroyed by a sweeping torrent, or worn away through gradual neglect, the effect is equally destructive. As a rapid fever and a consuming hectic are alike fatal to our natural health, so are flagrant immorality and torpid indolence to our moral wellbeing.

The philosophical doctrine of the slow recession of bodies from the sun, is a lively image of the reluctance with which we first abandon the light of virtue. The beginning of folly, and the first entrance on a dissipated life, cost some pangs to a well-disposed heart; but it is surprising to see how soon the progress ceases to be impeded by reflection, or slackened by remorse. For it is in moral as in natural things, the motion in minds as well as bodies, is accelerated by a nearer approach to the centre to which they are tending. If we recede slowly at first setting out, we advance rapidly in our future course; and to have begun to be wrong, is already to have made a great progress.

A constant habit of amusement relaxes the tone of the mind, and renders it totally incapable of application, study, or virtue. Dissipation not only indisposes its votaries to every thing useful and excellent, but disqualifies them for the enjoyment of pleasure itself. It softens the soul so much that the most superficial employment becomes a labour, and the slightest inconvenience an agony. The luxurious Sybarite must have lost all sense of real enjoyment, and all relish for true gratification before he complained that he could not sleep, because the rose-leaves lay double under him.

Luxury and dissipation, soft and gentle as their approaches are, and silently as they throw their silken chains above the heart, enslave it

more than the most active and turbulent vices. The mightiest conquerors have been conquered by these unarmed foes: the flowery fetters are fastened before they are felt. The blandishments of Circe were more fatal to the mariners of Ulysses, than the strength of Polypheme, or the brutality of the Læstrigons. Hercules, after he had cleansed the Augean stable, and performed all the other labours enjoined him by Euristheus, found himself a slave to the softnesses of the heart; and he, who wore a club and a lion's skin in the cause of virtue, condescended to the most effeminate employments to gratify a criminal weakness. Hannibal, who vanquished mighty nations, was himself overcome by the love of pleasure; and he, who despised cold, and want, and danger, and death, on the Alps, was conquered and undone by the dissolute indulgences of Capua.

Before the hero of the most beautiful and virtuous romance that ever was written, I mean Telemachus, landed on the island of Cyprus, he unfortunately lost his prudent companion, Mentor, in whom wisdom is so finely personified. At first, he beheld with horror the wanton and dissolute manners of the voluptuous inhabitants; the ill effects of their example were not immediate: he did not fall into the commission of glaring enormities; but his virtue was secretly and imperceptibly undermined, his heart was softened by their pernicious society, and the nerve of resolution was slackened: he every day beheld, with diminished indignation, the worship which was offered to Venus; the disorders of luxury and profaneness became less and less terrible, and the infectious air of the country enfeebled his courage, and relaxed his principles. In short, he had ceased to love virtue long before he thought of committing actual vice; and the duties of a manly piety were burdensome to him, before he was so debased as to offer perfumes and burn incense on the altar of the licentious goddess.*

"Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered," said Solomon's libertine. Alas! he did not reflect that they withered in the very gathering. The roses of pleasure seldom last long enough to adorn the brow of him who plucks them; for they are the only roses which do not retain their sweetness after they have lost their beauty.

The heathen poets often pressed on their readers the necessity of considering the shortness of life as an incentive to pleasure and voluptuousness; lest the season for indulging in them should pass unimproved. The dark and uncertain notions, not to say the absolute disbelief, which they entertained of a future state, is the only apology that can be offered for this reasoning. But, while we censure their tenets, let us not adopt their errors; errors which would be infinitely more inexcusable in us, who, from the clearer views which revelation has given us, shall not have their ignorance or their doubts to plead. It were well if we availed ourselves of that portion of their precept, which inculcates the improvement of every moment of our time; but not, like them, to dedicate the moments so redeemed to the pursuit of sensual and perishable pleasures, but to the securing of those which are spiritual in their nature, and eternal in their duration.

If, indeed, like the miserable* beings imagined by Swift, with a view to cure us of the irrational desire after immoderate length of days, we were condemned to a wretched earthly immortality, we should have an excuse for spending some portion of our time in dissipation, as we might then pretend, with some colour of reason, that we proposed, at a distant period, to enter on a better course of action. Or, if we never formed any such resolution, it would make no material difference to beings whose state was already unalterably fixed. But of the scanty portion of days assigned to our lot, not one should be lost in weak and irresolute procrastination.

Those who have not yet determined on the side of vanity, who, like Hercules (before he knew the Queen of Lydia, and had learned to spin), have not resolved on their choice between virtue and pleasure, may reflect, that it is still in their power to imitate that hero in his noble choice, and in his virtuous rejection. They may also reflect, with grateful triumph, that Christianity furnishes them with a better guide than the tutor of Alcidès, and with a surer light than the doctrines of pagan philosophy.

It is far from my design severely to condemn the innocent pleasures of life: I would only beg leave to observe, that those which are criminal should never be allowed; and that even the most innocent will, by immoderate use, soon cease to be so.

The women of this country were not sent into the world to shun society, but to embellish it; they were not designed for wilds and solitudes, but for the amiable and endearing offices of social life. They have useful stations to fill, and important characters to sustain. They are of a religion which does not impose penances, but enjoins duties; a religion of perfect purity, but of perfect benevolence also. A religion which does not condemn its followers to indolent seclusion from the world, but assigns them the more dangerous, though more honourable province, of living uncorrupted in it. In fine, a religion which does not direct them to fly from the multitude, that they may do nothing, but which positively forbids them to follow a multitude to do evil.

*Nothing can be more admirable than the manner in which this allegory is conducted; and the whole work, not to mention its images, machinery, and other poetical beauties, is written in the very finest strain of morality. In this latter respect, it is evidently superior to the works of the ancients, the moral of which is frequently tainted by the grossness of their mythology. Something of the purity of the Christian religion may be discovered even in Fenelon's heathens, and they catch a tincture of piety in passing through the hands of that amiable prelate.

THOUGHTS ON CONVERSATION.

It has been advised, and by very respectable authorities too, that in conversation, women

The Struldbrugs. See Voyage to Laputa.

should carefully conceal any knowledge or learning they may happen to possess. I own, with submission, that I do not see either the necessity or propriety of this advice. For if a young lady has that discretion and modesty, without which all knowledge is little worth, she will never make an ostentatious parade of it, because she will rather be intent on acquiring more, than on displaying what she has.

I am at a loss to know why a young female is instructed to exhibit, in the most advantageous point of view, her skill in music, her singing, dancing, taste in dress, and her acquaintance with the most fashionable games and amusements, while her piety is to be anxiously concealed, and her knowledge affectedly disavowed, lest the former should draw on her the appellation of an enthusiast, or the latter that of a pedant.

In regard to knowledge, why should she for ever affect to be on her guard lest she should be found guilty of a small portion of it? She need be the less solicitous about it, as it seldom proves to be so very considerable as to excite astonishment or admiration: for, after all the acquisitions which her talents and her studies have enabled her to make, she will, generally speaking, be found to have less of what is called learning, than a common schoolboy.

It would be to the last degree presumptuous and absurd, for a young woman to pretend to give the *ton* to the company; to interrupt the pleasure of others, and her own opportunity of improvement, by talking when she ought to listen; or to introduce subjects out of the common road, in order to show her own wit, or expose the want of it in others: but were the sex to be totally silent when any topic of literature happens to be discussed in their presence, conversation would lose much of its vivacity, and society would be robbed of one of its most interesting charms.

How easily and effectually may a wellbred woman promote the most useful and elegant conversation, almost without speaking a word! for the modes of speech are scarcely more variable than the modes of silence. The silence of listless ignorance, and the silence of sparkling intelligence, are perhaps as separately marked, and as distinctly expressed, as the same feelings could have been by the most unequivocal language. A woman, in a company where she has the least influence, may promote any subject by a profound and invariable attention, which shows that she is pleased with it, and by an illuminated countenance, which proves she understands it. This obliging attention is the most flattering encouragement in the world to men of sense and letters, to continue any topic of instruction or entertainment they happen to be engaged in: it owed its introduction perhaps to accident, the best introduction in the world for a subject of ingenuity, which, though it could not have been formally proposed without pedantry, may be continued with ease and good-humour; but which will be frequently and effectually stopped by the listlessness, inattention, or whispering of silly girls, whose weariness betrays their ignorance, and whose impatience exposes their ill-breeding. A polite man, however deeply interested in the subject on which he is conversing, catches at the slightest hint to have done: a look is a sufficient intimation; and if a pretty simpleton, who sits near him, seems *distraite*, he puts an end to his remarks, to the great regret of the reasonable part of the company, who perhaps might have gained more improvement by the continuance of such a conversation, than a week's reading would have yielded them; for it is such company as this, that give an edge to each other's wit, "as iron sharpeneth iron."

That silence is one of the great arts of conversation is allowed by Cicero himself, who says, there is not only an art, but even an eloquence in it. And this opinion is confirmed by a great modern,* in the following little anecdote from one of the ancients.

When many Grecian philosophers had a solemn meeting before the ambassador of a foreign prince, each endeavoured to show his parts by the brilliancy of his conversation, that the ambassador might have something to relate of the Grecian wisdom. One of them, offended, no doubt, at the loquacity of his companions, observed a profound silence; when the ambassador, turning to him, asked, "But what have you to say, that I may report it?" He made this laconic, but very pointed reply: "Tell your king, that you have found one among the Greeks who knew how to be silent."

There is a quality infinitely more intoxicating to the female mind than knowledge—this is, wit, the most captivating, but the most dreaded of all talents; the most dangerous to those who have it, and the most feared by those who have it not. Though it is against all the rules, yet I cannot find in my heart to abuse this charming quality. He who is grown rich without it, in safe and sober dulness, shuns it as a disease, and looks upon poverty as its invariable concomitant. The moralist declaims against it as the source of irregularity, and the frugal citizen dreads it more than bankruptcy itself, for he considers it as the parent of extravagance and beggary. The cynic will ask of what use it is? Of very little, perhaps: no more is a flower-garden, and yet it is allowed as an object of innocent amusement and delightful recreation. A woman who possesses this quality, has received a most dangerous present, perhaps not less so than beauty itself: especially if it be not sheathed in a temper peculiarly inoffensive, chastised by a most correct judgment, and restrained by more prudence than falls to the common lot.

This talent is more likely to make a woman vain than knowledge; for as wit is the immediate property of its possessor, and learning is only an acquaintance with the knowledge of other people, there is much more danger that we should be vain of what is our own, than of what we borrow.

But wit, like learning, is not near so common

* Lord Bacon.

a thing as is imagined. Let not therefore a young lady be alarmed at the acuteness of her own wit, any more than at the abundance of her own knowledge. The great danger is, lest she should mistake pertness, flippancy, or imprudence, for this brilliant quality, or imagine she is witty only because she is indiscreet. This is very frequently the case, and this makes the name of wit so cheap, while its real existence is so rare.

Lest the flattery of her acquaintance, or an overweening opinion of her own qualifications, should lead some vain and petulant girl into a false notion that she has a great deal of wit, when she has only a redundancy of animal spirits, she may not find it useless to attend to the definition of this quality, by one who had as large a portion of it as most individuals could ever boast:—

"'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
Admir'd with laughter at a feast,
Nor florid talk, which can that title gain,
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.

"Neither can that have any place,
At which a virgin hides her face;
Such dross the fire must purge away; 'tis just,
The author blush there, where the reader must."

COWLEY.

But those who actually possess this rare talent, cannot be too abstinent in the use of it. It often makes admirers, but it never makes friends; I mean, where it is the predominant feature; and the unprotected and defenceless state of womanhood calls for friendship more than for admiration. She who does not desire friends has a sordid and insensible soul; but she who is ambitious of making every man her admirer, has an invincible vanity and a cold heart.

But to dwell only on the side of policy, a prudent woman, who has established the reputation of some genius, will sufficiently maintain it, without keeping her faculties always on the stretch to say *good things*. Nay, if reputation alone be her object, she will gain a more solid one by her forbearance, as the wiser part of her acquaintance will ascribe it to the right motive, which is, not that she has less wit, but that she has more judgment.

The fatal fondness for indulging a spirit of ridicule, and the injurious and irreparable consequences which sometimes attend the *too prompt reply*, can never be too seriously or too severely condemned. Not to offend, is the first step towards pleasing. To give pain is as much an offence against humanity, as against good breeding; and surely it is as well to abstain from an action because it is sinful, as because it is unpolite. In company, young ladies would do well, before they speak, to reflect, if what they are going to say may not distress some worthy person present, by wounding them in their persons' families, connexions, or religious opinions. If they find it will touch them in either of these, I should advise them to suspect, that what they were going to say is not so *very* good a thing as they at first imagined. Nay, if even it was one of those bright ideas, which "Venus has imbued with a fifth part of her nectar," so much greater will be their merit in suppressing it, if there was a probability it might offend. Indeed, if they have the temper and prudence to make such a previous reflection, they will be more richly rewarded by their own inward triumph, at having suppressed a lively but severe remark, than they could have been with the dissembled applauses of the whole company, who, with that complaisant deceit which good breeding too much authorizes, affect openly to admire what they secretly resolve never to forgive.

I have always been delighted with the story of the little girl's eloquence, in one of the Children's Tales, who received from a friendly fairy the gift, that at every word she uttered, pinks, roses, diamonds, and pearls, should drop from her mouth. The hidden moral appears to be this, that it was the sweetness of her temper which produced this pretty fanciful effect; for when her malicious sister desired the same gift from the good-natured tiny intelligence, the venom of her own heart converted it into poisonous and loathsome reptiles.

A man of sense and breeding will sometimes join in the laugh, which has been raised at his expense by an illnatured repartee; but if it was very cutting, and one of those shocking sort of truths, which, as they can scarcely be pardoned even in private, ought never to be uttered in public, he does not laugh because he is pleased, but because he wishes to conceal how much he is hurt. As the sarcasm was uttered by a lady, so far from seeming to resent it, he will be the first to commend it; but, notwithstanding that, he will remember it as a trait of malice, when the whole company shall have forgotten it as a stroke of wit. Women are so far from being privileged by their sex to say unhandsome or cruel things, that it is this very circumstance which renders them more intolerable. When the arrow is lodged in the heart, it is no relief to him who is wounded to reflect, that the hand which shot it was a fair one.

Many women, when they have a favourite point to gain, or an earnest wish to bring any one over to their opinion, often use a very disingenuous method: they will state a case ambiguously, and then avail themselves of it, in whatever manner shall best answer their purpose; leaving your mind in a state of indecision as to their real meaning, while they triumph in the perplexity they have given you by the unfair conclusions they draw, from premises equivocally stated. They will also frequently argue from exceptions instead of rules, and are astonished when you are not willing to be contented with a prejudice, instead of a reason.

In a sensible company of both sexes, where women are not restrained by any other reserve than what their natural modesty imposes; and where the intimacy of all parties authorizes the utmost freedom of communication; should any one inquire what were the general sentiments on some particular subject, it will, I believe, commonly happen, that the ladies, whose imaginations have kept pace with the narration, have anticipated its end, and are ready to deliver their sentiments on it as soon as it is finished.

While some of the male hearers, whose minds were busied in settling the propriety, comparing the circumstances, and examining the consistencies of what was said, are obliged to pause and discriminate, before they think of answering. Nothing is so embarrassing as a variety of matter, and the conversation of women is often more perspicuous, because it is less laboured.

A man of deep reflection, if he does not keep up an intimate commerce with the world, will be sometimes so entangled in the intricacies of intense thought, that he will have the appearance of a confused and perplexed expression; while a sprightly woman will extricate herself with that lively and "rash dexterity," which will almost always please, though it is very far from being always right. It is easier to confound than to convince an opponent; the former may be effected by a turn that has more happiness than truth in it. Many an excellent reasoner, well skilled in the theory of the schools, has felt himself discomfited by a reply, which, though as wide of the mark and as foreign to the question as can be conceived, has disconcerted him more than the most startling proposition, or the most accurate chain of reasoning, could have done; and he has borne the laugh of his fair antagonist, as well as of the whole company, though he could not but feel that his own argument was attended with the fullest demonstration: so true is it, that it is not always necessary to be right, in order to be applauded.

But let not a young lady's vanity be too much elated with this false applause, which is given, not to her merit, but to her sex: she has not perhaps gained a victory, though she may be allowed a triumph; and it should humble her to reflect, that the tribute is paid, not to her strength, but her weakness. It is worth while to discriminate between that applause which is given from the complaisance of others, and that which is paid to our own merit.

Where great sprightliness is the natural bent of the temper, girls should endeavour to habituate themselves to a custom of observing, thinking, and reasoning. I do not mean, that they should devote themselves to abstruse speculation, or the study of logic; but she who is accustomed to give a due arrangement to her thoughts, to reason justly and pertinently on common affairs, and judiciously to deduce effects from their causes, will be a better logician than some of those who claim the name, because they have studied the art: this is being "learned without the rules;" the best definition, perhaps, of that sort of literature which is properest for the sex. That species of knowledge, which appears to be the result of reflection rather than of science, sits peculiarly well on women. It is not uncommon to find a lady, who, though she does not know a rule of syntax, scarcely ever violates one; and who constructs every sentence she utters with more propriety than many a learned dunce, who has every rule of Aristotle by heart, and who can lace his own threadbare discourse with the golden shreds of Cicero and Virgil.

It has been objected, and I fear with some reason, that female conversation is too frequently tinctured with a censorious spirit, and that ladies are seldom apt to discover much tenderness for the errors of a fallen sister.

"If it be so, it is a grievous fault."

No arguments can justify, no pleas can extenuate it. To insult over the miseries of an unhappy creature is inhuman, not to compassionate them is unchristian. The worthy part of the sex always express themselves humanely on the failings of others, in proportion to their own undeviating goodness.

And here I cannot help remarking that young women do not always carefully distinguish between running into the error of detraction, and its opposite extreme of indiscriminate applause. This proceeds from the false idea they entertain, that the direct contrary to what is wrong must be right. Thus, the dread of being only suspected of one fault, makes them actually guilty of another. The desire of avoiding the imputation of envy, impels them to be insincere; and to establish a reputation for sweetness of temper and generosity, they affect sometimes to speak of very indifferent characters with the most extravagant applause. With such, the hyperbole is a favourite figure; and every degree of comparison but the superlative is rejected, as cold and inexpressive. But this habit of exaggeration greatly weakens their credit, and destroys the weight of their opinion on other occasions; for people very soon discover what degree of faith is to be given both to their judgment and veracity. And those of real merit will no more be flattered by that approbation, which cannot distinguish the value of what it praises, than the celebrated painter must have been at the judgment passed on his works by an ignorant spectator, who, being asked what he thought of such and such very capital but very different pieces, cried out in an affected rapture, "All alike! all alike!"

It has been proposed to the young, as a maxim of supreme wisdom, to manage so dexterously in conversation, as to appear to be well acquainted with subjects, of which they are totally ignorant; and this, by affecting silence in regard to those on which they are known to excel. But why counsel this disingenuous fraud? Why add to the numberless arts of deceit, this practice of deceiving, as it were, on a settled principle? If to disavow the knowledge they really have be a culpable affectation, then, certainly, to insinuate an idea of their skill, where they are actually ignorant, is a most unworthy artifice.

But of all the qualifications for conversation, humility, if not the most brilliant, is the safest, the most amiable, and the most feminine. The affectation of introducing subjects with which others are unacquainted, and of displaying talents superior to the rest of the company, is as dangerous as it is foolish.

There are many, who never can forgive another for being more agreeable and more accomplished than themselves, and who can pardon any offence rather than an eclipsing merit.

Had the nightingale in the fable conquered his vanity, and resisted the temptation of showing a fine voice, he might have escaped the talons of the hawk. The melody of his singing was the cause of his destruction; his merit brought him into danger, and his vanity cost him his life.*

ON ENVY.

"Envy came next, envy with squinting eyes,
Sick of a strange disease, his neighbour's health;
Best then he lives when any better dies,
Is never poor but in another's wealth;
On best men's harms and griefs he feeds his fill,
Else his own maw doth eat with spiteful will,
Ill must the temper be, where diet is so ill."
Fletcher's Purple Island.

"Envy (says Lord Bacon) has no holydays." There cannot perhaps be a more lively and striking description of the miserable state of mind those endure, who are tormented with this vice. A spirit of emulation has been supposed to be the source of the greatest improvements; and there is no doubt but the warmest rivalship will produce the most excellent effects; but it is to be feared, that a perpetual state of contest will injure the temper so essentially, that the mischief will hardly be counterbalanced by any other advantages. Those whose progress is the most rapid, will be apt to despise their less successful competitors, who, in return, will feel the bitterest resentment against their more fortunate rivals. Among persons of real goodness, this jealousy and contempt can never be equally felt, because every advancement in piety will be attended with a proportionable increase of humility, which will lead them to contemplate their own improvements with modesty, and to view with charity the miscarriages of others.

When an envious man is melancholy, one may ask him, in the words of Bion, what evil has befallen himself, or what good has happened to another? This last is the scale by which he principally measures his felicity, and the very smiles of his friends are so many deductions from his own happiness. The wants of others are the standard by which he rates his own wealth; and he estimates his riches, not so much by his own possessions, as by the necessities of his neighbours.

When the malevolent intend to strike a very deep and dangerous stroke of malice, they generally begin the most remotely in the world from the subject nearest their hearts. They set out with commending the object of their envy for some trifling quality or advantage, which it is scarcely worth while to possess: they next proceed to make a general profession of their own good-will and regard for him: thus artfully removing any suspicion of their design, and clearing all obstructions for the insidious stab they are about to give; for who will suspect them of an intention to injure the object of their peculiar and professed esteem? The hearer's belief of the fact grows in proportion to the seeming reluctance with which it is told, and to the conviction he has, that the relater is not influenced by any private pique or personal resentment, but that the confession is extorted from him sorely against his inclination, and purely on account of his zeal for truth.

Anger is less reasonable and more sincere than envy.—Anger breaks out abruptly; envy is a great prefacer—anger wishes to be understood at once; envy is fond of remote hints and ambiguities; but, obscure as its oracles are, it never ceases to deliver them till they are perfectly comprehended;—anger repeats the same circumstances over again; envy invents new ones at every fresh recital—anger gives a broken, vehement, and interrupted narrative; envy tells a more consistent and more probable, though a falser tale—anger is excessively imprudent, for it is impatient to disclose every thing it knows; envy is discreet, for it has a great deal to hide—anger never consults times or seasons; envy waits for the lucky moment, when the wound it meditates may be made the most exquisitely painful, and the most incurably deep—anger uses more invective; envy does more mischief—simple anger soon runs itself out of breath, and is exhausted at the end of its tale; but it is for that chosen period that envy has treasured up the most barbed arrow in its whole quiver—anger puts a man out of himself; but the truly malicious generally preserve the appearance of self-possession, or they could not so effectually injure.—The angry man sets out by destroying his whole credit with you at once, for he very frankly confesses his abhorrence and detestation of the object of his abuse; while the envious man carefully suppresses all his own share in the affair.—The angry man defeats the end of his resentment, by keeping *himself* continually before your eyes, instead of his enemy; while the envious man artfully brings forward the object of his malice, and keeps himself out of sight.—The angry man talks loudly of his own wrongs; the envious of his adversary's injustice.—A passionate person, if his resentments are not complicated with malice, divides his time between sinning and sorrowing; and, as the irascible passions cannot constantly be at work, his heart may sometimes get a holyday.—Anger is a violent act, envy a constant habit—no one can be always angry, but he may be always envious:—an angry man's enmity (if he be generous) will subside when the object of his resentment becomes unfortunate; but the envious man can extract food from his malice out of calamity itself, if he finds his adversary bears it with dignity, or is pitied or assisted in it. The rage of the passionate man is totally extinguished by the death of his enemy; but the hatred of the malicious is not buried even in the grave of his rival: he will envy the good name he has left behind him; he will envy him the tears of his widow, the prosperity of his children, the esteem of his friends, the praises of his epitaph—nay, the very magnificence of his funeral.

* The poetical fable here alluded to is in Strada's Prolusions on the Style of Claudian, and has been translated into English verse by different writers; particularly Ford, the dramatist, and by Dr. Gibbons, as an example of the Enantiosis in his "Treatise on Rhetoric," published in 1767.—Ed.

"The ear of jealousy heareth all things" (says the wise man), frequently, I believe, more than is uttered, which makes the company of persons infected with it still more dangerous.

When you tell those of a malicious turn, any circumstance that has happened to another, though they perfectly know of whom you are speaking, they often affect to be at a loss, to forget his name, or to misapprehend you in some respect or other; and this merely to have an opportunity of slyly gratifying their malice by mentioning some unhappy defect or personal infirmity he labours under; and, not contented "to tack his every error to his name," they will, by way of farther explanation, have recourse to the faults of his father, or the misfortunes of his family; and this with all the seeming simplicity and candour in the world, merely for the sake of preventing mistakes, and to clear up every doubt of his identity.—If you are speaking of a lady, for instance, they will perhaps embellish their inquiries, by asking if you mean her whose great-grandfather was a bankrupt, though she has the vanity to keep a chariot, while others who are much better born walk on foot; or they will afterward recollect, that you may possibly mean her cousin, of the same name, whose mother was suspected of such or such an indiscretion, though the daughter had the luck to make her fortune by marrying, while her betters are overlooked.

To *hint* at a fault does more mischief than speaking out; for whatever is left for the imagination to finish, will not fail to be overdone; every hiatus will be more than filled up, and every pause more than supplied. There is less malice, and less mischief too, in telling a man's name than the initials of it; as a worthier person may be involved in the most disgraceful suspicions by such a dangerous ambiguity.

It is not uncommon for the envious, after having attempted to deface the fairest character so industriously, that they are afraid you will begin to detect their malice, to endeavour to remove your suspicions effectually, by assuring you that what they have just related is only the popular opinion; they themselves can never believe things are so bad as they are said to be; for their part, it is a rule with them always to hope the best. It is their way never to believe or report ill of any one. They will, however, mention the story in all companies, that they may do their friend the service of protesting their disbelief of it. More reputations are thus hinted away by false friends, than are openly destroyed by public enemies. An *if*, or a *but*, or a mortified look, or a languid defence, or an ambiguous shake of the head, or a hasty word affectedly recalled, will demolish a character more effectually, than the whole artillery of malice when openly levelled against it.

It is not that envy never praises—No, that would be making a public profession of itself, and advertising its own malignity; whereas the greatest success of its efforts depends on the concealment of their end. When envy intends to strike a stroke of Machiavelian policy, it sometimes affects the language of the most exaggerated applause; though it generally takes care, that the subject of its panegyric shall be a very indifferent and common character, so that it is well aware none of its praises will stick.

It is the unhappy nature of envy not to be contented with positive misery, but to be continually aggravating its own torments, by comparing them with the felicities of others. The eyes of envy are perpetually fixed on the object which disturbs it; nor can it avert them from it, though to procure itself the relief of a temporary forgetfulness. On seeing the innocence of the first pair,

> "Aside the devil turn'd,
> For envy, yet, with jealous leer malign,
> Eyed them askance."

As this enormous sin chiefly instigated the revolt, and brought on the ruin of the angelic spirits, so it is not improbable, that it will be a principal instrument of misery in a future world, for the envious to compare their desperate condition with the happiness of the children of God; and to heighten their actual wretchedness by reflecting on what they have lost.

Perhaps envy, like lying and ingratitude, is practised with more frequency, because it is practised with impunity; but there being no human laws against these crimes, is so far from an inducement to commit them, that this very consideration would be sufficient to deter the wise and good, if all others were ineffectual; for of how heinous a nature must those sins be which are judged above the reach of human punishment, and are reserved for the final justice of God himself!

ON THE DANGER OF SENTIMENTAL OR ROMANTIC CONNEXIONS.

Among the many evils which prevail under the sun, the abuse of words is not the least considerable. By the influence of time, and the perversion of fashion, the plainest and most unequivocal may be so altered, as to have a meaning assigned them almost diametrically opposite to their original signification.

The present age may be termed, by way of distinction, the age of sentiment, a word which, in the implication it now bears, was unknown to our plain ancestors. Sentiment is the varnish of virtue, to conceal the deformity of vice; and it is not uncommon for the same persons to make a jest of religion, to break through the most solemn ties and engagements, to practise every art of latent fraud and open seduction, and yet to value themselves on speaking and writing *sentimentally*.

But this refined jargon, which has infested letters and tainted morals, is chiefly admired and adopted by young ladies of a certain turn, who read *sentimental* books, write *sentimental* letters, and contract *sentimental* friendships.

Error is never likely to do so much mischief

as when it disguises its real tendency, and puts on an engaging and attractive appearance. Many a young woman, who would be shocked at the imputation of an intrigue, is extremely flattered at the idea of a sentimental connexion, though perhaps with a dangerous and designing man, who, by putting on this mask of plausibility and virtue, disarms her of her prudence, lays her apprehensions asleep, and involves her in misery; misery the more inevitable, because unsuspected. For she who apprehends no danger, will not think it necessary to be always upon her guard; but will rather invite than avoid the ruin which comes under so specious and so fair a form.

Such an engagement will be infinitely dearer to her vanity than an avowed and authorized attachment; for one of these sentimental lovers will not scruple, very seriously, to assure a credulous girl that her unparalleled merit entitles her to the adoration of the whole world, and that the universal homage of mankind is nothing more than the unavoidable tribute extorted by her charms. No wonder then she should be easily prevailed on to believe, that an individual is captivated by perfections which might enslave a million. But she should remember, that he who endeavours to intoxicate her with adulation, intends one day most effectually to humble her. For an artful man has always a secret design to pay himself in future for every present sacrifice. And this prodigality of praise, which he now appears to lavish with such thoughtless profusion, is, in fact, a sum economically laid out to supply his future necessities: of this sum he keeps an exact estimate, and at some distant day promises himself the most exorbitant interest for it. If he has address and conduct, and the object of his pursuit much vanity and some sensibility, he seldom fails of success; for so powerful will be his ascendency over her mind, that she will soon adopt his notions and opinions. Indeed, it is more than probable she possessed most of them before, having gradually acquired them in her initiation into the sentimental character. To maintain that character with dignity and propriety, it is necessary she should entertain the most elevated ideas of disproportionate alliances and disinterested love; and consider fortune, rank, and reputation, as mere chimerical distinctions and vulgar prejudices.

The lover, deeply versed in all the obliquities of fraud, and skilled to wind himself into every avenue of the heart which indiscretion has left unguarded, soon discovers on which side it is most accessible. He avails himself of this weakness by addressing her in a language exactly consonant to her own ideas. He attacks her with her own weapons, and opposes rhapsody to sentiment. He professes so sovereign a contempt for the paltry concerns of money, that she thinks it her duty to reward him for so generous a renunciation. Every plea he artfully advances of his own unworthiness, is considered by her as a fresh demand which her gratitude must answer. And she makes it a point of honour to sacrifice to him that fortune which he is too noble to regard. These professions of humility are the common artifice of the vain, and these protestations of generosity the refuge of the rapacious. And among its many smooth mischiefs, it is one of the sure and successful frauds of sentiment, to affect the most frigid indifference to those external and pecuniary advantages, which it is its great and real object to obtain.

A sentimental girl very rarely entertains any doubt of her personal beauty; for she has been daily accustomed to contemplate it herself, and to hear of it from others. She will not, therefore, be very solicitous for the confirmation of a truth so self-evident; but she suspects that her pretensions to understanding are more likely to be disputed, and, for that reason, greedily devours every compliment offered to those perfections which are less obvious and more refined. She is persuaded that men need only open their eyes to decide on her beauty, while it will be the most convincing proof of the taste, sense, and elegance of her admirer, that he can discern and flatter those qualities in her. A man of the character here supposed will easily insinuate himself into her affections, by means of this latent but leading foible, which may be called the guiding clew to a sentimental heart. He will affect to overlook that beauty which attracts common eyes and insnares common hearts, while he will bestow the most delicate praises on the beauties of her mind, and finish the climax of adulation by hinting that she is superior to it.

> "And when he tells her she hates flattery,
> She says she does, being then most flatter'd."

But nothing, in general, can end less delightfully than these sublime attachments, even where no acts of seduction were ever practised, but they are suffered, like mere sublunary connexions, to terminate in the vulgar catastrophe of marriage. That wealth, which lately seemed to be looked on with ineffable contempt by the lover, now appears to be the principal attraction in the eyes of the husband; and he, who but a few short weeks before, in a transport of sentimental generosity, wished her to have been a village maid, with no portion but her crook and her beauty, and that they might spend their days in pastoral love and innocence, has now lost all relish for the Arcadian life, or any other life in which she must be his companion.

On the other hand, she who was lately

> "An angel call'd, and angel-like ador'd,"

is shocked to find herself at once stripped of all her celestial attributes. This late divinity, who scarcely yielded to her sisters of the sky, now finds herself of less importance in the esteem of the man she has chosen, than any other mere mortal woman. No longer is she gratified with the tear of counterfeited passion, the sigh of dissembled rapture, or the language of premeditated adoration. No longer is the altar of her vanity loaded with the oblations of fictitious fondness, the incense of falsehood, or the sacrifice of flattery. Her apotheosis is ended! She feels herself degraded from the dignities and privileges of a goddess, to all the imperfections,

vanities, and weaknesses of a slighted woman and a neglected wife. Her faults, which were so lately overlooked, or mistaken for virtues, are now, as Cassius says, set in a notebook. The passion which was vowed eternal, lasted only a few short weeks; and the indifference, which was so far from being included in the bargain, that it was not so much as suspected, follows them through the whole tiresome journey of their insipid, vacant, joyless existence.

Thus much for the *completion* of the sentimental history. If we trace it back to its beginning, we shall find that a damsel of this cast had her head originally turned by pernicious reading, and her insanity confirmed by imprudent friendships. She never fails to select a beloved *confidante* of her own turn and humour, though, if she can help it, not quite so handsome as herself. A violent intimacy ensues, or, to speak the language of sentiment, an intimate union of souls immediately takes place, which is wrought to the highest pitch by a secret and voluminous correspondence, though they live in the same street, or perhaps in the same house. This is the fuel which principally feeds and supplies the dangerous flame of sentiment. In this correspondence the two friends encourage each other in the falsest notions imaginable. They represent romantic love as the great important business of human life, and describe all the other concerns of it as too low and paltry to merit the attention of such elevated beings, and fit only to employ the daughters of the plodding vulgar. In these letters, family affairs are misrepresented, family secrets divulged, and family misfortunes aggravated. They are filled with vows of eternal amity, and protestations of never-ending love. But interjections and quotations are the principal embellishments of these very sublime epistles. Every panegyric contained in them is extravagant and hyperbolical, and every censure exaggerated and excessive. In a favourite every frailty is heightened into a perfection, and in a foe degraded into a crime. The dramatic poets, especially the most tender and romantic, are quoted in almost every line, and every pompous or pathetic thought is forced to give up its natural and obvious meaning, and, with all the violence of misapplication, is compelled to suit some circumstance of imaginary wo of the fair transcriber. Alicia is not too mad for her heroics, nor Monimia too mild for her soft emotions.

Fathers have *flinty* hearts, is an expression worth an empire, and is always used with peculiar emphasis and enthusiasm. For a favourite topic of these epistles is the grovelling spirit and sordid temper of the parents, who will be sure to find no quarter at the hands of their daughters, should they presume to be so unreasonable as to direct their course of reading, interfere in their choice of friends, or interrupt their very important correspondence. But as these young ladies are fertile in expedients, and as their genius is never more agreeably exercised than in finding resources, they are not without their secret exultation, in case either of the above interesting events should happen, as they carry with them a certain air of tyranny and persecution which is very delightful. For a prohibited correspondence is one of the great incidents of a sentimental life, and a letter clandestinely received, the supreme felicity of a sentimental lady.

Nothing can equal the astonishment of these soaring spirits, when their plain friends or prudent relations presume to remonstrate with them on any impropriety in their conduct. But if these worthy people happen to be somewhat advanced in life, their contempt is then a little softened by pity, at the reflection that such very antiquated poor creatures should pretend to judge what is fit or unfit for ladies of their great refinement, sense, and reading. They consider them as wretches utterly ignorant of the sublime pleasures of a delicate and exalted passion, as tyrants whose authority is to be contemned, and as spies whose vigilance is to be eluded. The prudence of these worthy friends, they term suspicion; and their experience, dotage. For they are persuaded that the face of things has so totally changed since their parents were young, that though they might then judge tolerably for themselves, yet they are now (with all their advantages of knowledge and observation) by no means qualified to direct their more enlightened daughters; who, if they have made a great progress in the sentimental walk, will no more be influenced by the advice of their mother, than they would go abroad in her laced pinner or her brocade suit.

But young people never show their folly and ignorance more conspicuously than by this overconfidence in their own judgment, and this haughty disdain of the opinion of those who have known more days. Youth has a quickness of apprehension, which it is very apt to mistake for an acuteness of penetration. But youth, like cunning, though very conceited, is very shortsighted, and never more so than when it disregards the instructions of the wise and the admonitions of the aged. The same vices and follies influenced the human heart in their day which influence it now, and nearly in the same manner. One who well knew the world and its various vanities, has said, "The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

It is also a part of the sentimental character, to imagine that none but the young and beautiful have any right to the pleasure of society, or even to the common benefits and blessings of life. Ladies of this turn also affect the most lofty disregard for useful qualities and domestic virtues; and this is a natural consequence; for as this sort of sentiment is only a weed of idleness, she who is constantly and usefully employed has neither leisure nor propensity to cultivate it.

A sentimental lady principally values herself on the enlargement of her notions, and her liberal way of thinking. This superiority of soul chiefly manifests itself in the contempt of those minute delicacies and little decorums,

which, trifling as they may be thought, tend at once to dignify the character, and to restrain the levity, of the younger part of the sex.

Perhaps the error here complained of originates in mistaking *sentiment* and *principle* for each other. Now, I conceive them to be extremely different. Sentiment is the virtue of *ideas*, and principle the virtue of *action*. Sentiment has its seat in the head, principle in the heart. Sentiment suggests fine harangues and subtle distinctions; principle conceives just notions, and performs good actions in consequence of them. Sentiment refines away the simplicity of truth and the plainness of piety; and, as a celebrated wit* has remarked of his no less celebrated contemporary, gives us virtue in words and vice in deeds. Sentiment may be called the Athenian, who *knew* what was right; and principle the Lacedemonian, who *practised* it.

But these qualities will be better exemplified by an attentive consideration of two admirably drawn characters of Milton, which are beautifully, delicately, and distinctly marked. These are, Belial, who may not be improperly called the *Demon of Sentiment*; and Abdiel, who may be termed the *Angel of Principle*.

Survey the picture of Belial, drawn by the sublimest hand that ever held the poetic pencil.

"A fairer person lost not heaven; he seem'd
For dignity composed, and high exploit,
But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels, for his thoughts were low,
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Tim'rous and slothful; yet he pleased the ear."
Paradise Lost, Book II.

Here is a lively and exquisite representation of art, subtlety, wit, fine breeding, and polished manners; on the whole, of a very accomplished and sentimental spirit.

Now turn to the artless, upright, and unsophisticated Abdiel.

"Faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."—Book V.

But it is not from these descriptions, just and striking as they are, that their characters are so perfectly known, as from an examination of their conduct through the remainder of this divine work; in which it is well worth while to remark the consonancy of their actions, and what the above pictures seem to promise. It will also be observed, that the contrast between them is kept up throughout, with the utmost exactness of delineation, and the most animated strength of colouring.

On a review it will be found that Belial *talked* all, and Abdiel *did* all. The former,

"With words still clothed in reason's guise,
Counsell'd ignobie ease, and peaceful sloth
Not peace"—Book II.

In Abdiel you will constantly find the eloquence of action. When tempted by the rebellious angels, with what retorted scorn, with what honest indignation he deserts their multitudes, and retreats from their contagious society!

"All night the dreadless angel unpursued
Through heaven's wide champaign held his way."
Book VI.

No wonder he was received with such acclamations of joy by the celestial powers, when there was—

"But one,
Yes, of so many myriads fallen, but one
Returned not lost."—Ibid.

And afterward, in a close contest with the arch fiend,

"A noble stroke he lifted high
On the proud crest of Satan."—Ibid.

What was the effect of this courage of the vigilant and active seraph?

"Amazement seized
The rebel throne, but greater rage to see
Thus foiled their mightiest."

Abdiel had the superiority of Belial as much in the warlike combat, as in the peaceful counsels.

"Nor was it aught but just,
That he who in debate of truth had won,
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor."

But notwithstanding I have spoken with some asperity against sentiment as opposed to principle, yet I am convinced, that true genuine sentiment (not the sort I have been describing), may be so connected with principle as to bestow on it its brightest lustre, and its most captivating graces. And enthusiasm is so far from being disagreeable, that a portion of it is perhaps indispensably necessary in an engaging woman. But it must be the enthusiasm of the heart, not of the senses. It must be the enthusiasm which grows up with the feeling mind, and is cherished by a virtuous education; not that which is compounded of irregular passions, and artificially refined by books of unnatural fiction and improbable adventure. I will even go so far as to assert, that a young woman cannot have any real greatness of soul, or true elevation of principle, if she has not a tincture of what the vulgar would call romance, but which persons of a certain way of thinking will discern to proceed from those fine feelings, and that charming sensibility, without which, though a woman may be worthy, yet she can never be amiable.

But this dangerous merit cannot be too rigidly watched, as it is very apt to lead those who possess it into inconveniences from which less interesting characters are happily exempt. Young women of strong sensibility may be carried by the very amiableness of this temper into the most alarming extremes. Their tastes are passions. They love and hate with all their hearts, and scarcely suffer themselves to feel a reasonable preference before it strengthens into a violent attachment.

When an innocent girl of this open, trusting, tender heart, happens to meet with one of her own sex and age, whose address and manners are engaging, she is instantly seized with an

* See Voltaire's Prophecy concerning Rousseau.

ardent desire to commence a friendship with her. She feels the most lively impatience at the restraints of company, and the decorums of ceremony. She longs to be alone with her, longs to assure her of the warmth of her tenderness, and generously ascribes to the fair stranger all the good qualities she feels in her own heart, or rather all those which she has met with in her reading, dispersed in a variety of heroines. She is persuaded that her new friend unites them all in herself, because she carries in her prepossesing countenance the promise of them all. How cruel and how censorious would this inexperienced girl think her mother was, who should venture to hint that the agreeable unknown had defects in her temper, or exceptions in her character. She would mistake these hints of discretion for the insinuations of an uncharitable disposition. At first she would perhaps listen to them with a generous impatience, and afterward with a cold and silent disdain. She would despise them as the effect of prejudice, misrepresentation, or ignorance. The more aggravated the censure, the more vehemently would she protest in secret, that her friendship for this dear injured creature (who is raised much higher in her esteem by such injurious suspicions) shall know no bounds, as she is assured it can know no end.

Yet this trusting confidence, this honest indiscretion, is at this early period of life as amiable as it is natural; and will, if wisely cultivated, produce, at its proper season, fruits infinitely more valuable than all the guarded circumspection of premature, and therefore artificial prudence. Men, I believe, are seldom struck with these sudden prepossessions in favour of each other. They are not so unsuspecting nor so easily led away by the predominance of fancy. They engage more warily, and pass through the several stages of acquaintance, intimacy, and confidence, by slower gradations; but women, if they are sometimes deceived in the choice of a friend, enjoy even then a higher degree of satisfaction than if they never trusted. For to be always clad in the burdensome armour of suspicion is more painful and inconvenient than to run the hazard of suffering now and then a transient injury.

But the above observations only extend to the young and the inexperienced; for I am very certain, that women are capable of as faithful and as durable friendship as any of the other sex. They can enter not only into all the enthusiastic tenderness, but into all the solid fidelity of attachment. And if we cannot oppose instances of equal weight with those of Nysus and Euryalus, Theseus and Pirithous, Pylades and Orestes, let it be remembered that it is because the recorders of those characters were men, and that the very existence of them is merely poetical.

TRUE AND FALSE MEEKNESS.

A low voice and soft address are the common indications of a wellbred woman, and should seem to be the natural effects of a meek and quiet spirit; but they are only the outward and visible signs of it; for they are no more meekness itself, than a red coat is courage, or a black one devotion.

Yet nothing is more common than to mistake the sign for the thing itself; nor is any practice more frequent than that of endeavouring to acquire the exterior mark, without once thinking to labour after the interior grace. Surely this is beginning at the wrong end, like attacking the symptom and neglecting the disease. To regulate the features while the soul is in tumults, or to command the voice while the passions are without restraint, is as idle as throwing odours into a stream when the source is polluted.

The *sapient* king,* who knew better than any man the nature and the power of beauty, has assured us, that the temper of the mind has a strong influence upon the features: "Wisdom maketh the face to shine," says that exquisite judge; and surely no part of wisdom is more likely to produce this amiable effect, than a placid serenity of soul.

It will not be difficult to distinguish the true from the artificial meekness. The former is universal and habitual; the latter, local and temporary. Every young female may keep this rule by her, to enable her to form a just judgment of her own temper: if she is not as gentle to her chambermaid as she is to her visiter, she may rest satisfied that the spirit of gentleness is not in her.

Who would not be shocked and disappointed to behold a wellbred young lady, soft and engaging as the doves of Venus, displaying a thousand graces and attractions to win the hearts of a large company; and, the instant they are gone, to see her look mad as the Pythian maid, and all the frightened graces driven from her furious countenance, only because her gown was brought home a quarter of an hour later than she expected, or her riband sent half a shade lighter or darker than she ordered?

All men's characters are said to proceed from their servants; and this is more particularly true of ladies: for as their situations are more domestic, they lie more open to the inspection of their families, to whom their real characters are easily and perfectly known; for they seldom think it worth while to practise any disguise before those whose good opinion they do not value, and who are obliged to submit to their most insupportable humours, because they are paid for it.

Among women of breeding, the exterior of gentleness is so uniformly assumed, and the whole manner is so perfectly level and *uni*, that it is next to impossible for a stranger to know any thing of their true dispositions by conversing with them, and even the very features are so exactly regulated, that physiognomy, which may sometimes be trusted among the vulgar, is, with the polite, a most lying science.

A very termagant woman, if she happen also to be a very artful one, will be conscious she

* Solomon is here understood; but the term by which he is indicated, ill suits the dignity of one who had the reputation of being the wisest of men.—Ed.

has so much to conceal, that the dread of betraying her real temper will make her put on an over-acted softness, which, from its very excess, may be distinguished from the natural, by a penetrating eye. That gentleness is ever liable to be suspected for the counterfeited, which is so excessive as to deprive people of the proper use of speech and motion, or which, as Hamlet says, makes them lisp and amble, and nickname God's creatures.

The countenance and manners of some very fashionable persons may be compared to the inscriptions on their monuments, which speak nothing but good of what is within; but he who knows any thing of the world, or of the human heart, will no more trust to the courtesy, than he will depend on the epitaph.

Among the various artifices of factitious meekness, one of the most frequent and most plausible, is that of affecting to be always equally delighted with all persons and all characters. The society of these languid beings is without confidence, their friendship without attachment, and their love without affection, or even preference. This insipid mode of conduct may be safe, but I cannot think it has either taste, sense, or principle in it.

These uniformly smiling and approving ladies, who have neither the noble courage to reprehend vice, nor the generous warmth to bear their honest testimony in the cause of virtue, conclude every one to be illnatured who has any penetration, and look upon a distinguishing judgment as want of tenderness. But they should learn, that this discernment does not always proceed from an uncharitable temper, but from that long experience and thorough knowledge of the world, which lead those who have it to scrutinize into the conduct and disposition of men, before they trust entirely to those fair appearances which sometimes veil the most insidious purposes.

We are perpetually mistaking the qualities and dispositions of our own hearts. We elevate our failings into virtues, and qualify our vices into weaknesses: and hence arise so many false judgments respecting meekness. Self-ignorance is at the root of all this mischief. Many ladies complain that, for their part, their spirit is so meek they can bear nothing; whereas if they spoke truth, they would say, their spirit is so high and unbroken, that they can bear nothing. Strange! to plead their meekness as a reason why they cannot endure to be crossed, and to produce their impatience of contradiction as a proof of their gentleness!

Meekness, like most other virtues, has certain limits, which it no sooner exceeds than it becomes criminal. Servility of spirit is not gentleness, but weakness; and if allowed, under the specious appearances it sometimes puts on, will lead to the most dangerous compliances. She who hears innocence maligned without vindicating it, falsehood asserted without contradicting it, or religion profaned without resenting it, is not gentle, but wicked.

To give up the cause of an innocent, injured friend, if the popular cry happens to be against him, is the most disgraceful weakness. This was the case of Madame de Maintenon. She loved the character and admired the talents of Racine; she caressed him while he had no enemies, but wanted the greatness of mind, or rather the common justice, to protect him against their resentment when he had; and her favourite was abandoned to the suspicious jealousy of the king, when a prudent remonstrance might have preserved him.—But her tameness, if not absolute connivance in the great massacre of the Protestants, in whose church she had been bred, is a far more guilty instance of her weakness; an instance which, in spite of all her devotional zeal and incomparable prudence, will disqualify her from shining in the annals of good women, however she may be entitled to figure among the great and the fortunate. Compare her conduct with that of her undaunted and pious countryman and contemporary, Bougi, who, when Louis would have prevailed on him to renounce his religion for a commission or a government, nobly replied, "If I could be persuaded to betray my God for a marshal's staff, I might betray my king for a bribe of much less consequence."

Meekness is imperfect, if it be not both active and passive; if it will not enable us to subdue our own passions and resentments, as well as qualify us to bear patiently the passions and resentments of others.

Before we give way to any violent emotion of anger, it would perhaps be worth while to consider the object which excites it, and to reflect for a moment, whether the thing we so ardently desire, or so vehemently resent, be really of as much importance to us, as that delightful tranquillity of soul which we renounce in pursuit of it. If, on a fair calculation, we find we are not likely to get as much as we are sure to lose, then, putting all religious considerations out of the question, common sense and human policy will tell us, we have made a foolish and unprofitable exchange. Inward quiet is a part of one's self; the object of our resentment may be only a matter of opinion, and certainly, what makes a portion of our actual happiness, ought to be too dear to us to be sacrificed for a trifling, foreign, perhaps imaginary good.

The most pointed satire I remember to have read on a mind enslaved by anger, is an observation of Seneca's. "Alexander," said he, "had two friends, Clitus and Lysimachus; the one he exposed to a lion, the other to himself; he who was turned loose to the beast escaped, but Clitus was murdered, for he was turned loose to an angry man."

A passionate woman's happiness is never in her own keeping; it is the sport of accident, and the slave of events. It is in the power of her acquaintance, her servants, but chiefly of her enemies; and all her comforts lie at the mercy of others. So far from being willing to learn of Him who was meek and lowly, she considers meekness as the want of a becoming spirit, and lowliness as a despicable and vulgar meanness. And an imperious woman will so little covet the ornament of a meek and quiet

spirit, that it is almost the only ornament she will not be solicitous to wear. But resentment is a very expensive vice. How dearly has it cost its votaries, even from the sin of Cain, the first offender in this kind! "It is cheaper (says a pious writer) to forgive, and save the charges."

If it were only for mere human reasons, it would turn to a better account to be patient: nothing defeats the malice of an enemy like a spirit of forbearance; the return of rage for rage cannot be so effectually provoking. True gentleness, like an impenetrable armour, repels the most pointed shafts of malice: they cannot pierce through this invulnerable shield, but either fall hurtless to the ground, or return to wound the hand that shot them.

A meek spirit will not look out of itself for happiness, because it finds a constant banquet at home; yet, by a sort of divine alchymy, it will convert all external events to its own profit, and be able to deduce some good, even from the most unpromising: it will extract comfort and satisfaction from the most barren circumstances; "it will suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock."

But the supreme excellence of this complacent quality is, that it naturally disposes the mind where it resides to the practice of every other that is amiable. Meekness may be called the pioneer of all the other virtues, which levels every obstruction, and smooths every difficulty that might impede their entrance, or retard their progress.

The peculiar importance and value of this amiable virtue may be farther seen in its permanency. Honours and dignities are transient; beauty and riches, frail and fugacious, to a proverb. Would not the truly wise, therefore, wish to have some one possession, which they might call their own in the severest exigencies? But this wish can only be accomplished by acquiring and maintaining that calm and absolute self-possession, which, as the world had no hand in giving, it cannot, by the most malicious exertion of its power, take away.

THOUGHTS
ON
The Cultivation of the HEART *and* TEMPER
IN THE
EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

I HAVE not the foolish presumption to imagine that I can offer any thing new on a subject which has been so successfully treated by many able and learned writers. I would only, with all possible deference, beg leave to hazard a few short remarks on that part of the subject of education, which I would call the *education of the heart*. I am well aware, that this part also has not been less skilfully and forcibly discussed than the rest, though I cannot, at the same time, help remarking, that it does not appear to have been so much adopted into common practice.

It appears, then, that notwithstanding the great and real improvements which have been made in the affair of female education, and notwithstanding the more enlarged and generous views of it which prevail in the present day, that there is still a very material defect, which it is not, in general, enough the object of attention to remove. This defect seems to consist in this, that too little regard is paid to the dispositions of the mind, that the indications of the temper are not properly cherished, nor the affections of the heart sufficiently regulated.

In the first education of girls, as far as the customs which fashion establishes are right, they should undoubtedly be followed. Let the exterior be made a considerable object of attention, but let it not be the principal; let it not be the only one. Let the graces be industriously cultivated, but let them not be cultivated at the expense of the virtues. Let the arms, the head, the whole person be carefully polished, but let not the heart be the only portion of the human anatomy which shall be totally overlooked.

The neglect of this cultivation seems to proceed as much from a bad taste as from a false principle. The generality of people form their judgment of education by slight and sudden appearances, which is certainly a wrong way of determining. Music, dancing, and languages, gratify those who teach them, by perceptible and almost immediate effects; and, when there happens to be no imbecility in the pupil, nor deficiency in the master, every superficial observer can, in some measure, judge of the progress. The effects of most of these accomplishments address themselves to the senses; and there are more who can see and hear, than there are who can judge and reflect.

Personal perfection is not only more obvious, it is also more rapid; and, even in very accomplished characters, elegance usually precedes principle.

But the heart, that natural seat of evil propensities, that little troublesome empire of the passions, is led to what is right by slow motions and imperceptible degrees. It must be admonished by reproof, and allured by kindness. Its liveliest advances are frequently impeded by the obstinacy of prejudice, and its brightest promises often obscured by the tempests of passion. It is slow in its acquisition of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety.

There is another reason, which proves this mental cultivation to be more important, as well as more difficult, than any other part of education. In the usual fashionable accomplishments, the business of acquiring them is almost always getting forward, and one difficulty is conquered before another is suffered to show itself; for a prudent teacher will level the road his pupil is to pass, and smooth the inequalities which might retard her progress.

But in morals (which should be the great object constantly kept in view), the task is far more difficult. The unruly and turbulent desires of the heart are not so obedient; one passion will start up before another is suppressed. The subduing Hercules cannot cut off the heads so often as the prolific hydra can produce

them, nor fell the stubborn Antæus so fast as he can recruit his strength, and rise in vigorous and repeated opposition.

If all the accomplishments could be bought at the price of a single virtue, the purchase would be infinitely dear! And, however startling it may sound, I think it is, notwithstanding, true, that the labours of a good and wise mother, who is anxious for her daughter's most important interests, will seem to be at variance with those of her instructers. She will doubtless rejoice at her progress in any polite art, but she will rejoice with trembling—humility and piety form the solid and durable basis, on which she wishes to raise the superstructure of the accomplishments, while the accomplishments themselves are frequently of that unsteady nature, that if the foundation is not secured, in proportion as the building is enlarged, it will be overloaded and destroyed by those very ornaments, which were intended to embellish what they have contributed to ruin.

The more ostensible qualifications should be carefully regulated, or they will be in danger of putting to flight the modest train of retreating virtues, which cannot safely subsist before the bold eye of public observation, or bear the bolder tongue of impudent and audacious flattery. A tender mother cannot but feel an honest triumph, in contemplating those excellences in her daughter which deserve applause, but she will also shudder at the vanity which that applause may excite, and at those hitherto unknown ideas which it may awaken.

The master—it is his interest, and perhaps his duty—will naturally teach a girl to set her improvements in the most conspicuous point of light. *Se faire valoir* is the great principle industriously inculcated into her young heart, and seems to be considered as a kind of fundamental maxim in education. It is, however, the certain and effectual seed, from which a thousand yet unborn vanities will spring. This dangerous doctrine (which yet is not without its uses) will be counteracted by the prudent mother, not in so many words, but by a watchful and scarcely perceptible dexterity. Such a one will be more careful to have the talents of her daughter cultivated than exhibited.

One would be led to imagine, by the common mode of female education, that life consisted of one universal holyday, and that the only contest was, who should be best enabled to excel in the sports and games that were to be celebrated on it. Merely ornamental accomplishments will but indifferently qualify a woman to perform the duties of life, though it is highly proper she should possess them, in order to furnish the amusements of it. But is it right to spend so large a portion of life without some preparation for the business of living? A lady may speak a little French and Italian, repeat a few passages in a theatrical tone, play and sing, have her dressing-room hung with her own drawings, and her person covered with her own tambour-work, and may, notwithstanding, have been very badly educated. Yet I am far from attempting to depreciate the value of these qualifications: they are most of them not only highly becoming, but often indispensably necessary, and a polite education cannot be perfected without them. But as the world seems to be very well apprized of their importance, there is the less occasion to insist on their utility. Yet, though wellbred young women should learn to dance, sing, recite, and draw, the end of a good education is not that they may become dancers, singers, players, or painters; its real object is to make them good daughters, good wives, good mistresses, good members of society, and good Christians. The above qualifications, therefore, are intended to adorn their leisure, not to employ their lives; for an amiable and wise woman will always have something better to value herself on than these advantages, which, however captivating, are still but subordinate parts of a truly excellent character.

But I am afraid parents themselves sometimes contribute to the error of which I am complaining. Do they not often set a higher value on those acquisitions which are calculated to attract observation, and catch the eye of the multitude, than on those which are valuable, permanent, and internal? Are they not sometimes more solicitous about the opinion of others respecting their children, than about the real advantage and happiness of the children themselves? To an injudicious and superficial eye, the best educated girl may make the least brilliant figure, as she will probably have less flippancy in her manner, and less repartee in her expression; and her acquirements, to borrow Bishop Sprat's idea, will be rather "enamelled than embossed." But her merit will be known and acknowledged by all who come near enough to discern, and have taste enough to distinguish. It will be understood and admired by the man whose happiness she is one day to make, whose family she is to govern, and whose children she is to educate. He will not seek for her in the haunts of dissipation, for he knows he shall not find her there; but he will seek for her in the bosom of retirement, in the practice of every domestic virtue, in the exertion of every amiable accomplishment, exerted in the shade, to enliven retirement, to heighten the endearing pleasures of social intercourse, and to embellish the narrow but charming circle of family delights. To this amiable purpose, a truly good and well-educated young lady will dedicate her more elegant accomplishments, instead of exhibiting them to attract admiration, or depress inferiority.

Young girls, who have more vivacity than understanding, will often make a sprightly figure in conversation. But this agreeable talent for entertaining others is frequently dangerous to themselves, nor is it by any means to be desired or encouraged very early in life. This immaturity of wit is helped on by frivolous reading, which will produce its effect in much less time than books of solid instruction; for the imagination is touched sooner than the understanding; and effects are more rapid as they are more pernicious. Conversation should be the *result* of education, not the *precursor* of it. It is a

golden fruit, when suffered to grow gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if precipitated by forced and unnatural means, it will in the end become vapid in proportion as it is artificial.

The best effects of a careful and religious education are often very remote; they are to be discovered in future scenes, and exhibited in untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into fresh situations, and making demands on its prudence, its firmness, its integrity, or its piety. Those whose business it is to form it, can foresee none of these situations; yet, as far as human wisdom will allow, they must enable it to provide for them all, with an humble dependance on the Divine assistance. A well-disciplined soldier must learn and practise all his evolutions, though he does not know on what service his leader may command him, by what foe he shall be attacked, nor what mode of combat the enemy may use.

One great art of education consists in not suffering the feelings to become too acute by unnecessary awakening, nor too obtuse by the want of exertion. The former renders them the source of calamity, and totally ruins the temper; while the latter blunts and debases them, and produces a dull, cold, and selfish spirit. For the mind is an instrument, which, if wound too high, will lose its sweetness, and if not enough strained, will abate of its vigour.

How cruel is it to extinguish, by neglect or unkindness, the precious sensibility of an open temper, to chill the amiable glow of an ingenuous soul, and to quench the bright flame of a noble and generous spirit! These are of higher worth than all the documents of learning, of dearer price than all the advantages which can be derived from the most refined and artificial mode of education.

But sensibility and delicacy, and an ingenuous temper, make no part of education, exclaims the pedagogue—they are reducible to no class—they come under no article of instruction—they belong neither to languages nor to music. What an error! They *are* a part of education, and of infinitely more value

"Than all their pedant discipline e'er knew."

It is true, they are ranged under no class, but they are superior to all; they are of more esteem than languages or music, for they are the language of the heart, and the music of the according passions. Yet this sensibility is, in many instances, so far from being cultivated, that it is not uncommon to see those who affect more than usual sagacity, cast a smile of supercilious pity, at any indication of a warm, generous, or enthusiastic temper in the lively and the young; as much as to say, "they will know better, and will have more discretion when they are older." But every appearance of amiable simplicity, or of honest shame, nature's hasty conscience, will be dear to sensible hearts; they will carefully cherish every such indication in a young female; for they will perceive that it is this temper, wisely cultivated, which will one day make her enamoured of the loveliness of virtue, and the beauty of holiness: from which she will acquire a taste for the doctrines of religion, and a spirit to perform the duties of it. And those who wish to make her ashamed of this charming temper, and seek to dispossess her of it, will, it is to be feared, give her nothing better in exchange. But whoever reflects at all, will easily discern how carefully this enthusiasm is to be directed, and how judiciously its redundances are to be lopped away.

Prudence is not natural to children; they can, however, substitute art in its stead. But is it not much better that a girl should discover the faults incident to her age, than conceal them under this dark and impenetrable veil? I could almost venture to assert, that there is something more becoming in the very errors of nature, where they are undisguised, than in the affectation of virtue itself, where the reality is wanting. And I am so far from being an admirer of prodigies, that I am extremely apt to suspect them; and am always infinitely better pleased with nature in her more common modes of operation. The precise and premature wisdom which some girls havec unning enough to assume, is of a more dangerous tendency than any of their natural failings can be, as it effectually covers those secret bad dispositions, which, if they displayed themselves, might be rectified. The hypocrisy of assuming virtues which are not inherent in the heart, prevents the growth and disclosure of those real ones, which it is the great end of education to cultivate.

But if the natural indications of the temper are to be suppressed and stifled, where are the diagnostics by which the state of the mind is to be known? The wise Author of all things, who did nothing in vain, doubtless intended them as symptoms, by which to judge of the diseases of the heart; and it is impossible diseases should be cured before they are known. If the stream be so cut off as to prevent communication, or so choked up as to defeat discovery, how shall we ever reach the source, out of which are the issues of life?

This cunning, which, of all the different dispositions girls discover, is most to be dreaded, is increased by nothing so much as by fear. If those about them express violent and unreasonable anger at every trivial offence, it will always promote this temper, and will very frequently create it, where there was a natural tendency to frankness. The indiscreet transports of rage which many betray on every slight occasion, and the little distinction they make between venial errors and premeditated crimes, naturally dispose a child to conceal, what she does not however care to suppress. Anger in one will not remedy the faults of another; for how can an instrument of sin cure sin? If a girl is kept in a state of perpetual and slavish terror, she will perhaps have artifice enough to conceal those propensities which she knows are wrong, or those actions which she thinks are most obnoxious to punishment. But, nevertheless, she will not cease to indulge those propensities, and to commit those actions, when she can do it with impunity.

Good *dispositions*, of themselves, will go but

a very little way, unless they are confirmed into good *principles*. And this cannot be effected but by a careful course of religious instruction, and a patient and laborious cultivation of the moral temper.

But, notwithstanding girls should not be treated with unkindness, nor the first openings of the passions blighted by cold severity; yet I am of opinion that young females should be accustomed very early in life to a certain degree of restraint. The natural cast of character, and the moral distinctions between the sexes, should not be disregarded, even in childhood. That bold, independent, enterprising spirit, which is so much admired in boys, should not, when it happens to discover itself in the other sex, be encouraged, but suppressed. Girls should be taught to give up their opinions betimes, and not pertinaciously to carry on a dispute, even if they should know themselves to be in the right. I do not mean, that they should be robbed of the liberty of private judgment, but that they should by no means be encouraged to contract a contentious or contradictory turn. It is of the greatest importance to their future happiness, that they should acquire a submissive temper and a forbearing spirit: for it is a lesson which the world will not fail to make them frequently practise, when they come abroad into it, and they will not practise it the worse for having learned it the sooner. These early restraints, in the limitation here meant, are so far from being an effect of cruelty, that they are the most indubitable marks of affection, and are the more meritorious, as they are severe trials of tenderness. But all the beneficial effects which a mother can expect from this watchfulness, will be entirely defeated, if it is practised occasionally, and not habitually, and if it ever appears to be used to gratify caprice, ill-humour, or resentment.

Those who have children to educate ought to be extremely patient: it is indeed a labour of love. They should reflect that extraordinary talents are neither essential to the wellbeing of society, nor to the happiness of individuals. If that had been the case, the beneficent Father of the universe would not have made them so rare. For it is as easy for an Almighty Creator to produce a Newton, as an ordinary man; and he could have made those powers common which we now consider as wonderful, without any miraculous exertion of his omnipotence, if the existence of many Newtons had been necessary to the perfection of his wise and gracious plan.

Surely, therefore, there is more piety, as well as more sense, in labouring to improve the talents which children actually have, than in lamenting that they do not possess supernatural endowments or angelic perfections. A passage of Lord Bacon's furnishes an admirable incitement for endeavouring to carry the amiable and Christian grace of charity to its farthest extent, instead of indulging an over-anxious care for more brilliant but less important acquisitions. "The desire of power in excess (says he) caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall; but in charity is no excess, neither can men nor angels come into danger by it."

A girl who has docility will seldom be found to want understanding enough for all the purposes of a social, a happy, and a useful life. And when we behold the tender hope of fond and anxious love blasted by disappointment, the defect will as often be discovered to proceed from the neglect or the error of cultivation, as from the natural temper; and those who lament the evil, will sometimes be found to have occasioned it.

It is as injudicious for parents to set out with too sanguine a dependance on the merit of their children, as it is for them to be discouraged at every repulse. When their wishes are defeated in this or that particular instance, where they had treasured up some darling expectation, this is so far from being a reason for relaxing their attention, that it ought to be an additional motive for redoubling it. Those who hope to do a great deal, must not expect to do every thing. If they know any thing of the malignity of sin, the blindness of prejudice, or the corruption of the human heart, they will also know, that that heart will always remain, after the very best possible education, full of infirmity and imperfection. Extraordinary allowances, therefore, must be made for the weakness of nature in this its weakest state. After much is done, much will remain to do, and much, very much, will still be left undone: for this regulation of the passions and affections cannot be the work of education alone, without the concurrence of divine grace operating on the heart. Why then should parents repine, if their efforts are not always crowned with immediate success? They should consider, that they are not educating cherubims or seraphims, but men and women; creatures, who at their best estate are altogether vanity: how little then can be expected from them in the weakness and imbecility of infancy! I have dwelt on this part of the subject the longer, because I am certain that many, who have set out with a warm and active zeal, have cooled on the very first discouragement, and have afterward almost totally remitted their vigilance, through a criminal kind of despair.

Great allowances must be made for a profusion of gayety, loquacity, and even indiscretion in children, that there may be animation enough left to supply an active and useful character, when the first fermentation of the youthful passions is over, and the redundant spirits shall come to subside.

If it be true, as a consummate judge of human nature has observed,

"That not a vanity is given in vain,"

it is also true, that there is scarcely a single passion which may not be turned to some good account, if prudently rectified, and skilfully turned into the road of some neighbouring virtue. It cannot be violently bent, or unnaturally forced towards an object of a totally opposite nature, but may be gradually inclined towards a correspondent but superior affection. Anger, hatred,

resentment, and ambition, the most restless and turbulent passions which shake and distract the human soul, may be led to become the most active opposers of sin, after having been its most successful instruments. Our anger, for instance, which can never be totally subdued, may be made to turn against ourselves, for our weak and imperfect obedience—our hatred against every species of vice—our ambition, which will not be discarded, may be ennobled: it will not change its name, but its object; it will despise what it lately valued, nor be contented to grasp at less than immortality.

Thus the joys, fears, hopes, desires, all the passions and affections, which separate in various currents from the soul, will, if directed into their proper channels, after having fertilized wherever they have flowed, return again to swell and enrich the parent source.

That the very passions which appear the most uncontrollable and unpromising, may be intended, in the great scheme of Providence, to answer some important purpose, is remarkably evidenced in the character and history of Saint Paul. A remark on this subject by an ingenious old Spanish writer, which I will here take the liberty to translate, will better illustrate my meaning.

"To convert the bitterest enemy into the most zealous advocate, is the work of God for the instruction of man. Plutarch has observed, that the medical science would be brought to the utmost perfection, when poison should be converted into physic. Thus, in the mortal disease of Judaism and idolatry, our blessed Lord converted the adder's venom of Saul the persecutor, into that cement which made Paul the chosen vessel. That manly activity, that restless ardour, that burning zeal for the law of his fathers, that ardent thirst for the blood of Christians, did the Son of God find necessary in the man who was one day to become the defender of his suffering people."*

To win the passions, therefore, over to the cause of virtue, answers a much nobler end than their extinction would possibly do, even if that could be effected. But it is their nature never to observe a neutrality; they are either rebels or auxiliaries, and an enemy subdued is an ally obtained. If I may be allowed to change the allusion so soon, I would say that the passions also resemble fires, which are friendly and beneficial when under proper direction, but if suffered to blaze without restraint, they carry devastation along with them, and, if totally extinguished, leave the benighted mind in a state of cold and comfortless inanity.

But in speaking of the usefulness of the passions as instruments of virtue, envy and lying must always be excepted: these, I am persuaded, must either go on in still progressive mischief, or else be radically cured, before any good can be expected from the heart which has been infected with them. For I never will believe that envy, though passed through all the moral strainers, can be refined into a virtuous emulation, or lying improved into an agreeable turn for innocent invention. Almost all the other passions may be made to take an amiable hue; but these two must either be totally extirpated, or be always contented to preserve their original deformity, and to wear their native black.

* Obras de Quevedo, vida de San Pablo Apostol. [Francisco Quevedo de Villegas, born at Villeneuve d'l Infantado, in Spain, in 1570, and died there in 1645. His works, printed at Brussels (3 vols.) consist of poems, romances, satires, and some religious pieces, among which is the one here quoted.—Ed.]

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO THE FEMALE CHARACTER.

Various are the reasons why the greater part of mankind cannot apply themselves to arts or letters. Particular studies are only suited to the capacities of particular persons. Some are incapable of applying to them from the delicacy of their sex, some from the unsteadiness of youth, and others from the imbecility of age. Many are precluded by the narrowness of their education, and many by the straitness of their fortune. The wisdom of God is wonderfully manifested in this happy and well-ordered diversity, in the powers and properties of his creatures; since by thus admirably suiting the agent to the action, the whole scheme of human affairs is carried on with the most agreeing and consistent economy, and no chasm is left for want of an object to fill it, exactly suited to its nature.

But in the great and universal concern of religion, both sexes, and all ranks, are equally interested. The truly catholic spirit of Christianity accommodates itself, with an astonishing condescension, to the circumstances of the whole human race. It rejects none on account of their pecuniary wants, their personal infirmities, or their intellectual deficiencies. No superiority of parts is the least recommendation, nor is any depression of fortune the smallest objection. None are too wise to be excused from performing the duties of religion, nor are any too poor to be excluded from the consolations of its promises.

If we admire the wisdom of God in having furnished different degrees of intelligence, so exactly adapted to their different destinations, and in having fitted every part of his stupendous work, not only to serve its own immediate purpose, but also to contribute to the beauty and perfection of the whole; how much more ought we to adore that goodness which has perfected the divine plan, by appointing one wide, comprehensive, and universal means of salvation: a salvation which all are invited to partake; by a means which all are capable of using; which nothing but voluntary blindness can prevent our comprehending, and nothing but wilful error can hinder us from embracing.

The muses are coy, and will only be wooed and won by some highly-favoured suiters. The sciences are lofty, and will not stoop to the reach of ordinary capacities. But "wisdom (by which the royal preacher means piety) is a lov-

ing spirit; she is easily seen of them that love her, and found of all such as seek her." Nay, she is so accessible and condescending, "that she preventeth them that desire her, making herself first known unto them."

We are told by the same animated writer, "that wisdom is the breath of the power of God." How infinitely superior, in grandeur and sublimity, is this description to the origin of the *wisdom* of the heathens, as described by their poets and mythologists! In the exalted strains of the Hebrew poetry, we read, that "wisdom is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness."

The philosophical author of "The Defence of Learning" observes, that knowledge has something of venom and malignity in it, when taken without its proper corrective; and what that is, the inspired Saint Paul teaches us, by placing it as the immediate antidote—"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." Perhaps it is the vanity of human wisdom, unchastised by this correcting principle, which has made so many infidels. It may proceed from the arrogance of a self-sufficient pride, that some philosophers disdain to acknowledge their belief in a Being who has judged proper to conceal from them the infinite wisdom of his counsels; who (to borrow the lofty language of the man of Uz) refused to consult them when he laid the foundations of the earth, when he shut up the sea with doors, and made the clouds the garment thereof.

A man must be an infidel either from pride, prejudice, or bad education: he cannot be one unawares, or by surprise; for infidelity is not occasioned by sudden impulse or violent temptation. He may be hurried by some vehement desire into an immoral action, at which he will blush in his cooler moments, and which he will lament as the sad effect of a spirit unsubdued by religion; but infidelity is a calm, considerate act, which cannot plead the weakness of the heart, or the seduction of the senses. Even good men frequently fail in their duty through the infirmities of nature and the allurements of the world; but the infidel errs on a plan, on a settled and deliberate principle.

But though the minds of men are sometimes fatally infected with this disease, either through unhappy prepossession, or some of the other causes above-mentioned, yet I am unwilling to believe that there is in nature so monstrously incongruous a being as a *female* infidel. The least reflection on the temper, the character, and the education of women, makes the mind revolt with horror from an idea so improbable and so unnatural.

May I be allowed to observe that, in general, the minds of girls seem more aptly prepared in their early youth for the reception of serious impressions than those of the other sex, and that their less exposed situations in more advanced life qualify them better for the preservation of them? The daughters (of good parents I mean) are often more carefully instructed in their religious duties than the sons, and this from a variety of causes. They are not so soon sent from under the paternal eye into the bustle of the world, and so early exposed to the contagion of bad example: their hearts are naturally more flexible, soft, and liable to any kind of impression the forming hand may stamp on them; and, lastly, as they do not receive the same classical education with boys, their feeble minds are not obliged at once to receive and separate the precepts of Christianity, and the documents of pagan philosophy. The necessity of doing this perhaps somewhat weakens the serious impressions of young men, at least till the understanding is formed; and confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. They only casually read, or hear read, the Scriptures of truth, while they are obliged to learn by heart, construe, and repeat, the poetical fables of the less than human gods of the ancients. And, as the excellent author of "The Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion"* observes, "Nothing has so much contributed to corrupt the true spirit of the Christian institution, as that partiality which we contract, in our earliest education, for the manners of pagan antiquity."

Girls, therefore, who do *not* contract this early partiality, ought to have a clearer notion of their religious duties: they are not obliged, at an age when the judgment is so weak, to distinguish between the doctrines of Zeno, of Epicurus, and of Christ; and to embarrass their minds with the various morals which were taught in the Porch, in the Academy, and on the Mount.

It is presumed that these remarks cannot possibly be so misunderstood, as to be construed into the least disrespect to literature, or a want of the highest reverence for a learned education, the basis of all elegant knowledge: they are only intended, with all proper deference, to point out to young women that, however inferior their advantages of acquiring a knowledge of the belles-lettres are to those of the other sex, yet it depends on themselves not to be surpassed in this most important of all studies, for which their abilities are equal, and their opportunities perhaps greater.

But the mere exemption from infidelity is so small a part of the religious character, that I hope no one will attempt to claim any merit from this negative sort of goodness, or value herself merely for not being the very worst thing she possibly can be. Let no mistaken girl fancy she gives a proof of her wit by her want of piety, or that a contempt of things serious and sacred will exalt her understanding, or raise her character even in the opinion of the most avowed male infidels. For one may venture to affirm, that with all their profligate ideas, both of women and of religion, neither Bolingbroke, Wharton, Buckingham, nor even Lord Chesterfield himself, would have esteemed a woman the more for her being irreligious.

With whatever ridicule a polite freethinker may affect to treat religion himself, he will think it necessary his wife should entertain dif-

* Soame Jenyns, Esq.

ferent notions of it. He may pretend to despise it as a matter of opinion, depending on creeds and systems; but, if he is a man of sense, he will know the value of it as a governing principle, which is to influence her conduct and direct her actions. If he sees her unaffectedly sincere in the practice of her religious dutics, it will be a secret pledge to him that she will be equally exact in fulfilling the conjugal; for he can have no reasonable dependance on her attachment to *him*, if he has no opinion of her fidelity to God; for she who neglects first duties, gives but an indifferent proof of her disposition to fill up inferior ones; and how can a man of any understanding (whatever his own religious professions may be) trust that woman with the care of his family, and the education of his children, who wants herself the best incentive to a virtuous life, the belief that she is an accountable creature, and the reflection that she has an immortal soul.

Cicero spoke it as the highest commendation of Cato's character, that he embraced philosophy, not for the sake of *disputing* like a philosopher, but of *living* like one. The chief purpose of Christian knowledge is to promote the great end of a Christian life. Every rational woman should, no doubt, be able to give a reason of the hope that is in her; but this knowledge is best acquired, and the duties consequent on it best performed, by reading books of plain piety and practical devotion, and not by entering into the endless feuds, and engaging in the unprofitable contentions, of partial controversialists. Nothing is more unamiable than the narrow spirit of party zeal, nor more disgusting than to hear a woman deal out judgments, and denounce vengeance, against any one who happens to differ from her in some opinion, perhaps of no real importance, and which, it is probable, she may be just as wrong in rejecting, as the object of her censure is in embracing. A furious and unmerciful female bigot wanders as far beyond the limits prescribed to her sex, as a Thalestris or a Joan d'Arc. Violent debate has made as few converts as the sword, and both these instruments are particularly unbecoming when wielded by a female hand.

But, though no one will be frightened out of their opinions, yet they may be persuaded out of them; they may be touched by the affecting earnestness of serious conversation, and allured by the attractive beauty of a consistently serious life. And while a young woman ought to dread the name of a wrangling polemic, it is her duty to aspire after the honourable character of a sincere Christian. But this dignified character she can by no means deserve, if she is ever afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them. A profligate, who makes it a point to ridicule every thing which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, will be disconcerted at the spirited yet modest rebuke of a pious young woman. But there is as much efficacy in the manner of reproving profaneness, as in the words. If she corrects it with moroseness, she defeats the effect of her remedy by her unskilful manner of administering it. If, on the other hand, she affects to defend the insulted cause of God in a faint tone of voice, and studied ambiguity of phrase, or with an air of levity, and a certain expression of pleasure in her eyes, which proves she is secretly delighted with what she pretends to censure, she injures religion much more than he did who publicly profaned it; for she plainly indicates, either that she does not believe or respect what she professes. The other attacked it as an open foe; she betrays it as a false friend. No one pays any regard to the opinion of an avowed enemy; but the desertion or treachery of a professed friend is dangerous indeed!

It is a strange notion which prevails in the world, that religion only belongs to the old and the melancholy, and that it is not worth while to pay the least attention to it, while we are capable of attending to any thing else. They allow it to be proper enough for the clergy, whose business it is, and for the aged, who have not spirits for any business at all. But till they can prove that none except the clergy and the aged *die*, it must be confessed that this is most wretched reasoning.

Great injury is done to the interests of religion, by placing it in a gloomy and unamiable light. It is sometimes spoken of as if it would actually make a handsome woman ugly, or a young one wrinkled. But can any thing be more absurd than to represent the beauty of holiness as the source of deformity?

There are few, perhaps, so entirely plunged in business, or absorbed in pleasure, as not to intend, at some future time, to set about a religious life in good earnest. But then they consider it as a kind of *dernier ressort*, and think it prudent to defer flying to this disagreeable refuge, till they have no relish left for any thing else. Do they forget, that to perform this great business well requires all the strength of their youth, and all the vigour of their unimpaired capacities? To confirm this assertion, they may observe how much the slightest indisposition, even in the most active season of life, disorders every faculty, and disqualifies them for attending to the most ordinary affairs; and then let them reflect how little able they will be to transact the most important of all business, in the moment of excruciating pain, or in the day of universal debility.

When the senses are palled with excessive gratification; when the eye is tired with seeing, and the ear with hearing; when the spirits are so sunk, that the *grasshopper is become a burden*, how shall the blunted apprehension be capable of understanding a new science, or the worn-out heart be able to relish a new pleasure?

To put off religion till we have lost all taste for amusement; to refuse listening to the voice of the charmer, till our enfeebled organs can no longer listen to the voice of "singing men and singing women," and not to devote our days to heaven till we have "no pleasure in them" ourselves, is but an ungracious offering. And it is a wretched sacrifice to the God of heaven, to present him with the remnants of decayed appetites, and the leavings of extinguished passions.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON GENIUS, TASTE, GOOD SENSE,* &c.

Good *sense* is as different from *genius* as perception is from invention; yet, though distinct qualities, they frequently subsist together. It is altogether opposite to *wit*, but by no means inconsistent with it. It is not science, for there is such a thing as unlettered good sense; yet, though it is neither wit, learning, nor genius, it is a substitute for each where they do not exist, and the perfection of all where they do.

Good sense is so far from deserving the appellation of *common sense*, by which it is frequently called, that it is perhaps one of the rarest qualities of the human mind. If, indeed, this name is given it in respect to its peculiar suitableness to the purposes of common life, there is great propriety in it. Good sense appears to differ from taste in this, that taste is an instantaneous decision of the mind, a sudden relish of what is beautiful, or disgust at what is defective in an object, without waiting for the slower confirmation of the judgment. Good sense is perhaps that confirmation which establishes a suddenly conceived idea or feeling, by the powers of comparing and reflecting. They differ also in this, that taste seems to have a more immediate reference to arts, to literature, and to almost every object of the senses; while good sense rises to moral excellence, and exerts its influence on life and manners. Taste is fitted to the perception and enjoyment of whatever is beautiful in art or nature: good sense, to the improvement of the conduct, and the regulation of the heart.

Yet the term good sense is used indiscriminately to express either a finished taste for letters, or an invariable prudence in the affairs of life. It is sometimes applied to the most moderate abilities, in which case the expression is certainly too strong; and at others to the most shining, when it is as much too weak and inadequate. A sensible man is the usual, but unappropriate phrase, for every degree in the scale of understanding, from the sober mortal, who obtains it by his decent demeanour and solid dulness, to him whose talents qualify him to rank with a Bacon, a Harris, or a Johnson.

Genius is the power of invention and imitation. It is an incommunicable faculty: no art or skill of the possessor can bestow the smallest portion of it on another: no pains or labour can reach the summit of perfection, where the seeds of it are wanting in the mind; yet it is capable of infinite improvement where it actually exists, and is attended with the highest capacity of communicating instruction as well as delight to others.

It is the peculiar property of genius to strike out great or beautiful things: it is the felicity of good sense not to do absurd ones. Genius breaks out in splendid sentiments and elevated ideas; good sense confines its more circumscribed, but perhaps more useful walk, within the limits of prudence and propriety.

> "The poet's eye in a fine phrensy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing,
> A local habitation and a name."*

This is, perhaps, the finest picture of human genius that ever was drawn by a human pencil. It presents a living image of a creative imagination, or a power of inventing things which have no actual existence.

With superficial judges, who, it must be confessed, make up the greater part of the mass of mankind, talents are only liked or understood to a certain degree. Lofty ideas are above the reach of ordinary apprehensions: the vulgar allow those who possess them to be in a somewhat higher state of mind than themselves; but of the vast gulf which separates them, they have not the least conception. They acknowledge a superiority, but of its extent they neither know the value, nor can conceive the reality. It is true, the mind, as well as the eye, can take in objects larger than itself; but this is only true of great minds; for a man of low capacity who considers a consummate genius, resembles one who, seeing a column for the first time, and standing at too great a distance to take in the whole of it, concludes it to be flat: or, like one unacquainted with the first principles of philosophy, who, finding the sensible horizon appear a plain surface, can form no idea of the spherical form of the whole, which he does not see, and laughs at the account of antipodes, which he cannot comprehend.

Whatever is excellent is also rare; what is useful is more common. How many thousands are born qualified for the coarse employments of life, for one who is capable of excelling in the fine arts! yet so it ought to be, because our natural wants are more numerous and more importunate than the intellectual.

Whenever it happens that a man of distinguished talents has been drawn by mistake, or precipitated by passion, into any dangerous indiscretion, it is common for those whose coldness of temper has supplied the place and usurped the name of prudence, to boast of their own steadier virtue, and triumph in their own superior caution—only because they have never been assailed by a temptation strong enough to surprise them into error. And with what a visible appropriation of the character to themselves do they constantly conclude with a cordial compliment to *common sense!* They point out the beauty and usefulness of this quality so forcibly and explicitly, that you cannot possibly mistake whose picture they are drawing with so flattering a pencil. The unhappy man whose conduct has been so feelingly arraigned, perhaps acted from good, though mistaken motives; at least, from motives of which his censurer has

* The author begs leave to offer an apology for introducing this essay, which, she fears, may be thought foreign to her purpose. But she hopes that her earnest desire of exciting a taste for literature in young ladies (which encouraged her to hazard the following remarks), will not *obstruct* her general design, even if it does not actually *promote* it.

* Shakspeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V Scene 1st.

not capacity to judge: but the event was unfavourable, nay, the action might be really wrong, and the vulgar maliciously take the opportunity of this single indiscretion, to lift themselves nearer on a level with a character which, except in this instance, has always thrown them at the most disgraceful and mortifying distance.

The elegant biographer of Collins, in his affecting apology for that unfortunate genius, remarks, "That the gifts of imagination bring the heaviest task on the vigilance of reason; and to bear those faculties with unerring rectitude, or invariable propriety, requires a degree of firmness, and of cool attention, which does not always attend the higher gifts of the mind; yet difficult as nature herself seems to have rendered the task of regularity to genius, it is the supreme consolation of dulness and of folly to point with Gothic triumph to those excesses which are the overflowing of faculties they never enjoyed."*

What the greater part of the world mean by common sense, will be generally found, on a closer inquiry, to be art, fraud, or selfishness! That sort of saving prudence which makes men extremely attentive to their own safety or profit; diligent in the pursuit of their own pleasures or interests; and perfectly at their ease as to what becomes of the rest of mankind: furies, where their own property is concerned; philosophers, when nothing but the good of others is at stake; and perfectly resigned under all calamities but their own.

When we see so many accomplished wits of the present age, as remarkable for the decorum of their lives as for the brilliancy of their writings, we may believe that, next to principle, it is owing to their *good sense*, which regulates and chastises their imaginations. The vast conceptions which enable a true genius to ascend the sublimest heights, may be so connected with the stronger passions as to give it a natural tendency to fly off from the straight line of regularity; till good sense, acting on the fancy, makes it gravitate powerfully towards that virtue which is its proper centre.

Add to this, when it is considered with what imperfection the divine wisdom has thought fit to stamp every thing human, it will be found that excellence and infirmity are so inseparably wound up in each other, that a man derives the soreness of temper, and irritability of nerve, which make him uneasy to others, and unhappy in himself, from those exquisite feelings, and that elevated pitch of thought, by which, as the apostle expresses it on a more serious occasion, he is, as it were, out of the body.

It is not astonishing, therefore, when the spirit is carried away by the magnificence of its own ideas,

"Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspired;"

that the frail body, which is the natural victim of pain, disease, and death, should not always be able to follow the mind in its aspiring flights, but should be as imperfect as if it belonged only to an ordinary soul.

Besides, might not Providence intend to humble human pride, by presenting to our eyes so mortifying a view of the weakness and infirmity of even his best work? Perhaps man, who is already but a little lower than the angels, might, like the revolted spirits, totally have shaken off obedience and submission to his Creator, had not God wisely tempered human excellence with a certain consciousness of its own imperfection. But though this inevitable alloy of weakness may frequently be found in the best characters, yet how can that be the source of triumph and exaltation to any, which, if properly weighed, must be the deepest motive of humiliation to all? A good-natured man will be so far from rejoicing, that he will be secretly troubled whenever he reads that the greatest Roman moralist was tainted with avarice, and the greatest British philosopher with venality.*

It is remarked by Pope, in his Essay on Criticism, that

"Ten censure wrong, for one who writes amiss."

But I apprehend it does not therefore follow that to judge is more difficult than to write. If this were the case, the critic would be superior to the poet, whereas it appears to be directly the contrary. "The critic," says the great champion of Shakspeare,† "but fashions the body of a work; the poet must add the soul which gives force and direction to its actions and gestures." It should seem that the reason why so many more judge wrong than write ill, is because the number of readers is beyond all proportion greater than the number of writers. Every man who reads is in some measure a critic, and, with very common abilities, may point out real faults and material errors in a very well-written book; but it by no means follows that he is able to write any thing comparable to the work which he is capable of censuring. And unless the numbers of those who write and those who judge were more equal, the calculation seems not to be quite fair.

A capacity for relishing works of genius is the indubitable sign of a good taste. But if a proper disposition and ability to enjoy the compositions of others entitle a man to the claim of reputation, it is still a far inferior degree of merit to his who can invent and produce those compositions, the bare disquisition of which gives the critic no small share of fame.

The president of the royal academy,‡ in his admirable discourse on Imitation, has set the folly of depending on unassisted genius in the clearest light; and has shown the necessity of adding the knowledge of others to our own native powers, in his usual striking and masterly manner. "The mind," says he, "is a barren soil, is a soil soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized, and enriched with foreign matter."

* Dr. John Langhorne's Biographical Memoir, prefixed to the Poetical Works of William Collins.

* Seneca and Bacon.

† Mrs. Montagu, in her vindication of our immortal dramatist from the censorious remarks of Voltaire.—Ed.

‡ Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Yet it has been objected, that study is a great enemy to originality; but, even if this were true, it would perhaps be as well that an author should give us the ideas of still better writers, mixed and assimilated with the matter in his own mind, as those crude and undigested thoughts which he values under the notion that they are original. The sweetest honey neither tastes of the rose, the honeysuckle, nor the carnation, yet it is compounded of the very essence of them all.

If in the other fine arts this accumulation of knowledge is necessary, it is indispensably so in poetry. It is a fatal rashness for any one to trust too much to his own stock of ideas. He must invigorate them by exercise, polish them by conversation, and increase them by every species of elegant and virtuous knowledge, and the mind will not fail to reproduce with interest those seeds, which are sown in it by study and observation. Above all, let every one guard against the dangerous opinion that he knows enough; an opinion that will weaken the energy and reduce the powers of the mind, which, though once perhaps vigorous and effectual, will be sunk to a state of literary imbecility, by cherishing vain and presumptuous ideas of its own independence.

For instance, it may not be necessary that a poet should be deeply skilled in the Linnæan system; but it must be allowed that a general acquaintance with plants and flowers will furnish him with a delightful and profitable species of instruction. He is not obliged to trace nature in all her nice and varied operations, with the minute accuracy of a Boyle, or the laborious investigation of a Newton; but his good sense will point out to him that no inconsiderable portion of philosophical knowledge is requisite to the completion of his literary character. The sciences are more independent, and require little or no assistance from the graces of poetry; but poetry, if she would charm and instruct, must not be so haughty; she must be contented to borrow of the sciences many of her choicest allusions, and many of her most graceful embellishments; and does it not magnify the character of true poesy, that she includes within herself all the scattered graces of every separate art?

The rules of the great masters in criticism may not be so necessary to the forming a good taste, as the examination of those original mines from whence they drew their treasures of knowledge.

The three celebrated essays on the art of poetry do not teach so much by their laws as by their examples; the dead letter of their rules is less instructive than the living spirit of their verse. Yet these rules are to a young poet, what the study of logarithms is to a young mathematician: they do not so much contribute to form his judgment, as afford him the satisfaction of convincing him that he is right. They do not preclude the difficulty of the operation; but, at the conclusion of it, furnish him with a fuller demonstration that he has proceeded on proper principles. When he has well studied the masters in whose schools the first critics formed themselves, and fancies he has caught a spark of their divine flame, it may be a good method to try his own compositions by the test of the critic rules, so far indeed as the mechanism of poetry goes. If the examination be fair and candid, this trial, like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, will detect every latent error, and bring to light every favourite failing.

Good taste always suits the measure of its admiration to the merit of the composition it examines. It accommodates its praises, or its censure, to the excellence of a work, and appropriates it to the nature of it. General applause, or indiscriminate abuse, is the sign of a vulgar understanding. There are certain blemishes which the judicious and good-natured reader will candidly overlook. But the false sublime, the tumour which is intended for greatness, the distorted figure, the puerile conceit, and the incongruous metaphor, these are defects for which scarcely any other kind of merit can atone. And yet there may be more hope of a writer (especially if he be a young one), who is now and then guilty of some of these faults, than of one who avoids them all, not through judgment, but feebleness; and who, instead of deviating into error, is continually falling short of excellence. The mere absence of error implies that moderate and inferior degree of merit with which a cold heart and a phlegmatic taste will be better satisfied than with the magnificent irregularities of exalted spirits. It stretches some minds to an uneasy extension to be obliged to attend to compositions superlatively excellent; and it contracts liberal souls to a painful narrowness to descend to books of inferior merit. A work of capital genius, to a man of an ordinary mind, is the bed of Procrustes to one of a short stature, the man is too little to fill up the space assigned him, and undergoes the torture in attempting it: and a moderate or low production to a man of bright talents, is the punishment inflicted by Mezentius; the living spirit has too much animation to endure patiently to be in contact with a dead body.

Taste seems to be a sentiment of the soul which gives the bias to opinion, for we feel before we reflect. Without this sentiment, all knowledge, learning, and opinion would be cold, inert materials; whereas they become active principles when stirred, kindled, and inflamed by this animating quality.

There is another feeling which is called enthusiasm. The enthusiasm of sensible hearts is so strong, that it not only yields to the impulse with which striking objects act on it, but such hearts help on the effect by their own sensibility. In a scene where Shakspeare and Garrick give perfection to each other, the feeling heart does not merely accede to the delirium they occasion; it does more, it is enamoured of it, it solicits the delusion, it sues to be deceived, and grudgingly cherishes the sacred treasure of its feelings. The poet and performer concur in carrying us

"Beyond this visible diurnal sphere;"

they bear us aloft in their airy course with un-

resisted rapidity, if they meet not with any obstruction from the coldness of our own feelings. Perhaps only a few fine spirits can enter into the detail of their writing and acting; but the multitude do not enjoy less acutely, because they are not able philosophically to analyze the sources of their joy or sorrow. If the others have the advantage of judging, these have at least the privilege of feeling: and it is not from complaisance to a few leading judges, that they burst into peals of laughter, or melt into delightful agony; their hearts decide, and that is a decision from which there lies no appeal. It must however be confessed, that the nicer separations of character, and the lighter and almost imperceptible shades which sometimes distinguish them, will not be intimately relished, unless there be a consonancy of taste as well as feeling in the spectator; though, where the passions are principally concerned, the profane vulgar come in for a larger portion of the universal delight, than critics and connoisseurs are willing to allow them.

Yet enthusiasm, though the natural concomitant of genius, is no more genius itself, than drunkenness is cheerfulness; and that enthusiasm which discovers itself on occasions not worthy to excite it, is the mark of a wretched judgment and a false taste.

Nature produces innumerable objects: to imitate them is the province of genius; to direct those imitations is the property of judgment; to decide on their effects is the business of taste. For taste, who sits as supreme judge on the productions of genius, is not satisfied when she merely imitates nature: she must also, says an ingenious French writer, imitate *beautiful* nature. It requires no less judgment to reject than to choose; and genius might imitate what is vulgar under pretence that it was natural, if taste did not carefully point out those objects which are most proper for imitation. It also requires a very nice discernment to distinguish verisimilitude from truth; for there is a truth in taste nearly as conclusive as demonstration in mathematics.

Genius, when in the full impetuosity of its career, often touches on the very brink of error; and is, perhaps, never so near the verge of the precipice, as when indulging its sublimest flights. It is in those great, but dangerous moments, that the curb of vigilant judgment is most wanting: while safe and sober dulness observes one tedious and insipid round of tiresome uniformity, and steers equally clear of eccentricity and of beauty. Dulness has few redundances to retrench, few luxuriances to prune, and few irregularities to smooth. These, though errors, are the errors of genius, for there is rarely redundance without plenitude, or irregularity without greatness. The excesses of genius may easily be retrenched, but the deficiencies of dulness can never be supplied.

Those who copy from others will doubtless be less excellent than those who copy from nature. To imitate imitators, is the way to depart too far from the great original herself. The latter copies of an engraving retain fainter and fainter traces of the subject, to which the earlier impressions bore so strong a resemblance.

It seems very extraordinary, that it should be the most difficult thing in the world to be natural; and that it should be harder to hit off the manners of real life, and to delineate such characters as we converse with every day, than to imagine such as do not exist. But caricature is much easier than an exact outline, and the colouring of fancy less difficult than that of truth

People do not always know what taste they have, till it is awakened by some corresponding object; nay, genius itself is a fire, which in many minds would never blaze, if not kindled by some external cause.

Nature, the munificent mother, when she bestows the power of judging, accompanies it with a capacity for enjoying. The judgment, which is clear-sighted, points out such objects as are calculated to inspire love, and the heart instantaneously attaches itself to whatever is lovely.

In regard to literary reputation, a great deal depends on the state of learning in the particular age or nation in which an author lives. In a dark and ignorant period, moderate knowledge will entitle its possessor to a considerable share of fame; whereas, to be distinguished in a polite and lettered age, requires striking parts and deep erudition.

When a nation begins to emerge from a state of mental darkness, and to strike out the first rudiments of improvement, it chalks out a few strong but incorrect sketches, gives the rude outlines of general art, and leaves the filling up to the leisure of happier days, and the refinement of more enlightened times. Their drawing is a rude schizzo, and their poetry wild minstrelsey.

Perfection of taste is a point which a nation no sooner reaches, than it overshoots; and it is more difficult to return to it, after having passed it, than it was to attain when they fell short of it. Where the arts begin to languish after having flourished, they seldom indeed fall back to their original barbarism, but a certain feebleness of exertion takes place, and it is more difficult to recover them from this dying languor to their proper strength, than it was to polish them from their former rudeness; for it is a less formidable undertaking to refine barbarity, than to stop decay: the first may be laboured into elegance, but the latter will rarely be strengthened into vigour.

Taste exerts itself at first but feebly and imperfectly; it is repressed and kept back by a crowd of the most discouraging prejudices: like an infant prince, who, though born to reign, yet holds an idle sceptre, which he has not power to use, but is obliged to see with the eyes, and hear through the ears, of other men.

A writer of correct taste will hardly ever go out of his way, even in search of embellishment: he will study to attain the best end by the most natural means; for he knows that what is not natural cannot be beautiful, and that nothing can be beautiful out of its own place; for an improper situation will convert the most striking

beauty into a glaring defect. When by a well-connected chain of ideas, or a judicious succession of events, the reader is snatched to "Thebes or Athens," what can be more impertinent than for the poet to obstruct the operation of the passion he has just been kindling, by introducing a conceit which contradicts his purpose, and interrupts his business? Indeed, we cannot be transported, even in idea, to those places, if the poet does not manage so adroitly as not to make us sensible of the journey: the instant we feel we are travelling, the writer's art fails, and the delirium is at an end.

Proserpine, says Ovid, would have been restored to her mother Ceres, had not Ascalaphus seen her stop to gather a golden apple, when the terms of her restoration were, that she should taste nothing. A story pregnant with instruction for lively writers, who, by neglecting the main business, and going out of the way for false gratifications, lose sight of the end they should principally keep in view. It was this false taste that introduced the numberless *concetti* which disgrace the brightest of the Italian poets; and this is the reason why the reader only feels short and interrupted snatches of delight in perusing the brilliant but unequal compositions of Ariosto,* instead of that unbroken and undiminished pleasure which he constantly receives from Virgil, from Milton, and generally from Tasso. The first-mentioned Italian is the Atalanta, who will interrupt the most eager career, to pick up the glittering mischief; while the Mantuan and the British bards, like Hippomenes, press on warm in the pursuit, and unseduced by temptation.

A writer of real taste will take great pains in the perfection of his style, to make the reader believe that he took none at all. The writing which appears to be most easy, will be generally found to be least imitable. The most elegant verses are the most easily retained; they fasten themselves on the memory without its making any effort to preserve them, and we are apt to imagine that what is remembered with ease was written without difficulty.

To conclude: genius is a rare and precious gem, of which few know the worth; it is fitter for the cabinet of the connoisseur, than for the commerce of mankind. Good sense is a bank-bill, convenient for change, negotiable at all times, and current in all places. It knows the value of small things, and considers that an aggregate of them makes up the sum of human affairs. It elevates common concerns into matters of importance, by performing them in the best manner, and at the most suitable season. Good sense carries with it the idea of equality, while genius is always suspected of a design to impose the burden of superiority; and respect is paid to it with that reluctance which always attends other imposts, the lower orders of mankind generally repining most at demands by which they are least liable to be affected.

As it is the character of genius to penetrate with a lynx's beam into unfathomable abysses and uncreated worlds, and to see what is *not*, so it is the property of good sense to distinguish perfectly and judge accurately what really *is*. Good sense has not so piercing an eye, but it has as clear a sight: it does not penetrate so deeply, but as far as it *does* see, it discerns distinctly. Good sense is a judicious mechanic, who can produce beauty and convenience out of suitable means; but genius (I speak with reverence of the immeasurable distance) bears some remote resemblance to the Divine Architect, who produced perfection of beauty without any visible materials, "who spake and it was created;" who said, "Let it be, and it was."

MORIANA.

Accomplishments.—It is superfluous to decorate woman so highly for early youth; youth is itself a decoration. We mistakingly adorn most, that part of life which least requires it, and neglect to provide for that which will want it most. It is for that sober period, when life has lost its freshness, the passions their intenseness, and the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing. Our wisdom would be, to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a store of notions, ideas, principles, and habits, which may preserve, or transfer to the mind, that affection which was at first partly attracted by the person. But to add a vacant mind to a form which has ceased to please, to provide no subsidiary aid to beauty while it lasts, and especially no substitute when it is departed, is to render life comfortless, and marriage dreary.

Let such women as are disposed to be vain of their comparatively petty attainments, look up with admiration to those two contemporary shining examples, the venerable Elizabeth Carter and the blooming Elizabeth Smith. I knew them both, and to know was to revere them. In them let our young ladies contemplate profound and various learning, chastised by true Christian humility. In them let them venerate acquirements which would have been distinguished in a university, meekly softened and beautifully shaded by the gentle exertion of every domestic virtue, by the unaffected exercise of every feminine employment.

Admiration.—Self-deception is so easy, that I am ever afraid of highly extolling any good quality, lest I should sit down satisfied with having borne my testimony in its favour, and so rest contented with the praise instead of the practice. Commending a right thing is a cheap substitute for doing it, and with this we are too apt to satisfy ourselves.

* Ariosto was born at Reggio in 1474, and died of grief in 1535. His principal work, the poetical romance of "Orlando Furioso," some of his admirers affected to set in opposition to the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Tasso.—Ed.

Affections.—True religion is seated in the heart; that is the centre from which all the lines of right practice must diverge. It is the great duty and chief business of a Christian to labour to make all his affections, with all their motives, tendences, and operations, subservient to the word and will of God. His irregular passions, which are still apt to start out into disorder, will require vigilance to the end. He must not think all is safe, because the more tractable ones are not rebellious; but he may entertain a cheerful hope when those which were once rebellious are become tractable.

Ambition.—Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which bring less accession to its comfort than an unceasing struggle to rise to an elevation in society very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any stronger ascending power than mere vanity. Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural tendency to rise, and to lift their possessor. The flame in mounting does but obey its impulse. But when there is no energy more powerful than the passion to be great, destitute of the gifts which can confer greatness, the painful effects of ambition are like water forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires constant exertions of art, to keep up what art first set agoing.

Amusements.—I have known pious persons who would, on no account, allow their children to attend places of gay resort, who were yet little solicitous to extinguish the spirit which those places are calculated to generate and nourish. This is rather a geographical than a moral distinction. It is thinking more of the place than of the temper. They restrain their persons; but are not careful to expel from their hearts the dispositions which excite the appetite, and form the very essence of danger. A young creature cannot be happy who spends her time at home in amusements destined for exhibition, while she is forbidden to be exhibited.

The woman who derives her principles from the Bible, and her amusements from intellectual sources, from the beauties of nature, and from active employment and exercise, will not pant for beholders. She is no clamorous beggar for the extorted alms of admiration. She lives on her own stock. Her resources are within herself. She possesses the truest independence. She does not wait for the opinion of the world, to know if she is right; nor for the applause of the world, to know if she is happy.

Analogy.—The sacred writings frequently point out the analogy between natural and spiritual things. The same spirit which in the creation of the world moved upon the face of the waters, operates on the human character, to produce a new heart and a new life. By this operation, the affections and faculties of the man receive a new impulse—his dark understanding is illuminated, his rebellious will is subdued, his irregular desires are rectified; his judgment is informed, his imagination is chastised; his hopes and fears are directed to their true and adequate end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, an eternal separation from God the object of his fears. His love of the world is transmuted into the love of God. The lower faculties are pressed into the new service. The senses have a higher direction. The whole internal frame and constitution receive a nobler bent; the intents and purposes of the mind, a sublimer aim; his aspirations, a loftier flight; his vacillating desires find a fixed object; his vagrant purposes, a settled home; his disappointed heart a certain refuge. That heart, no longer the worshipper of the world, is struggling to become its conqueror. Our blessed Redeemer, in overcoming the world, bequeathed us his command to overcome it also; but, as he did not give the command without the example, so he did not give the example without the offer of a power to obey the command.

Anger.—We contrive to make revenge itself look like religion. We call down thunder on many a head, under pretence that those on whom we invoke it are God's enemies, when, perhaps, we invoke it because they are ours.

Applause.—Human applause is, by a worldly man, reckoned not only among the luxuries of life, but among articles of the first necessity. An undue desire to obtain it has certainly its foundation in vanity, and it is one of our grand errors to reckon vanity a trivial fault. An overestimation of character, and an anxious wish to conciliate all suffrages, is an infirmity from which even worthy men are not exempt; nay, it is a weakness from which, if they are not governed by a strict religious principle, worthy men are in most danger. Reputation being in itself so very desirable a good, those who actually possess it, and in some sense deserve to possess it, are apt to make it their standard, and to rest in it as their supreme aim and end.

We are as fond of the applauses even of the upper gallery as the dramatic poet. Like him, we affect to despise the mob, considered as individual judges, yet, as a mass, we court their applause. Like him, we feel strengthened by the number of voices in our favour, and are less anxious about the goodness of the work than about the loudness of the acclamation. Success is merit in the eyes of both.

Ascetic Piety.—A piety altogether spiritual, disconnected with all outward circumstances, a religion of pure meditation and abstracted devotion, was not made for so compound, so imperfect a creature as man. There have, indeed, been a few sublime spirits, "not touch'd, but rapt," who, totally cut off from the world, seem almost to have literally soared above this terrene region; who almost appear to have stolen the fire of the seraphim, and to have had no business on earth, but to keep alive the celestial flame. They would, however, have approximated more nearly to the example of their divine Master, the great standard and only perfect model, had they combined a more diligent discharge of the active duties and beneficences of life with their high devotional attainments.

Atheism.—It furnishes the most incontrovertible proof that the world by wisdom knew

not God, that it was at the very time, and in the very country, in which knowledge and taste had attained their utmost perfection, when the Porch and the Academy had given laws to human intellect, that atheism first assumed a shape, and established itself into a school of philosophy. It was at the moment when the mental powers were carried to the highest pitch in Greece, that it was settled as an infallible truth in this philosophy, that the *senses were the highest natural light of mankind.* It was in the most enlightened age of Rome that this atheistical philosophy was transplanted thither, and that one of her most elegant poets adopted it, and rendered it popular by the bewitching graces of his verse.

It seems as if the most accomplished nations stood in the most pressing need of the light of revelation; for it was not to the dark and stupid corners of the earth that the apostles had their earliest missions. One of St. Paul's first and noblest expositions of Christian truth was made before the most august deliberative assembly in the world, though, by-the-way, it does not appear that more than one member of Areopagus was converted. In Rome, some of the apostle's earliest converts belonged to the imperial palace. It was to the metropolis of cultivated Italy, it was to the "regions of Achaia," to the opulent and luxurious city of Corinth, in preference to the barbarous countries of the uncivilized world, that some of his first epistles were addressed.

During the late attempt to establish heathenism in a neighbouring country, does it not look as if the thirty theatres which were opened every night in its capital, in the early part of the revolution, had been intended, in imitation of the Romans, whose religion, titles, and offices the French affected to adopt, as a nightly expiation to the *goddess of Reason*, for the cruelties and carnage of the day?

Authors.—If we resolve never to read a work of instruction because the author had faults, Lord Bacon's inexhaustible mine of intellectual wealth might have still been unexplored. Luther, the man to whom the Protestant world owes more than to any other uninspired being, might remain unread, because he is said to have wanted the meekness of Melancthon. Even the divine instructions in the book of Ecclesiastes would have been written in vain.

Evil in the man would not invalidate the truths he has been teaching. Balaam, though a bad man, prophesied truly. Erasmus, whose piety is almost as doubtful as his wit and learning were unquestionable, yet, by throwing both into the right scale, was a valuable instrument in effecting the great work in which he was concerned. Erasmus powerfully assisted the Reformation, though it is not quite so clear that the Reformation essentially benefited Erasmus.

If, then, the writer advances unanswerable arguments in the cause of truth, if he impressively enforces its practical importance, his character, even if defective, should not invalidate his reasoning. Though we allow that even to the reader it is far more satisfactory when the life illustrates the writing, yet we must never bring the conduct of the man as any infallible test of the truth of his doctrine. Allow this, and the reverse of the proposition will be pleaded against us. Take the opposite case. Do we ever produce certain moral qualities which Hobbes, Bayle, Hume, and other sober skeptics possessed, as arguments for adopting their opinions? Do we infer, as a necessary consequence, that their sentiments are sound, because their lives were not flagitious?

It would be the highest degree of unfairness to prefer a charge of injustice, hypocrisy, or inconsistency against an author, because his life, in some respects, falls short of the strictness of his writings. It is a disparity almost inseparable from this state of frail mortality. He may have fallen into errors, and yet deserve to have no heavier charges brought against him than he has brought against others. Infirmity of temper, inequality of mind, a heart, though fearing to offend God, yet not sufficiently dead to the world:—these are the lingering effects of sin imperfectly subdued, in a heart which yet longs, prays, and labours for a complete deliverance from all its corruptions.

Of two evils, had not an author better be tedious than superficial? From an overflowing vessel you may gather more, indeed, than you want, but from an empty one you can gather nothing.

Avarice.—That charity begins at home, is not seldom pleaded as a reason why she should never stir out. There is one plea always ready as an apology for the eagerness to amass wealth; and it is a plea which has a good look. "We must provide for our childen," is the pretence; but we must indulge our avarice, is the truth. The fact is, a man is provident for his family, but he is covetous for himself. The sordid mind and the grasping hand are too eager to put off their gratification to so remote a period as the future aggrandizement of those for whom they pretend to amass. The covetous man hungers for instant gratification, for the pleasure of counting his hoards, for the pride of calling his lands by his own name

The Bible.—The sacred volume was composed by a vast variety of writers, men of every different rank and condition, of every diversity of character and turn of mind; the monarch and the plebeian, the illiterate and the learned, the foremost in talent and the moderately gifted in natural advantages, the historian and the legislator, the orator and the poet,—each had his immediate vocation, each his peculiar province: some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, living in ages remote from each other, under different modes of civil government, under different dispensations of the divine economy, filling a period of time which reached from the first dawn of heavenly light to its meridian radiance.

The Old Testament and the New, the Law and the Gospel; the prophets predicting events, and the evangelists recording them; the doctrinal yet didactic epistolary writers, and he

who closed the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic vision;—all these furnished their respective portions, and yet all tally with a dove-tailed correspondence: all the different materials are joined with a completeness the most satisfactory, with an agreement the most incontrovertible.

This instance of uniformity without design, of agreement without contrivance; this consistency maintained through a long series of ages, without a possibility of the ordinary methods for conducting such a plan; these unparalleled congruities, these unexampled coincidences—form altogether a species of evidence, of which there is no other instance in the history of all the other books in the world.

Our divine Teacher does not say *read*, but *search* the Scriptures. The doctrines of the Bible are of everlasting interest. All the great objects of history lose their value, as through the lapse of time they recede further from us; but those of the book of God are commensurate with the immortality of our nature. All existing circumstances, as they relate to this world merely, lose their importance as they lose their novelty; they even melt in air, as they pass before us.

While we are discussing events, they cease to be; while we are criticising customs, they become obsolete; while we are adopting fashions, they vanish; while we are condemning or defending parties, they change sides. While we are contemplating feuds, opposing factions, or deploring revolutions, they are extinct. Of created things, mutability is their character at the best, brevity their duration at the longest. But "the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

The Bible never warns us against imaginary evils, nor courts us to imaginary good.

Young persons should read the Scriptures, unaltered, unmutilated, unabridged. If parents do not make a point of this, the peculiarities of sacred language will become really obsolete to the next generation.

Blessings.—In adoring the providence of God, we are apt to be struck with what is new and out of course, while we too much overlook long, habitual, and uninterrupted mercies. But common mercies, if less striking, are more valuable, both because we have them always, and because others share them. The ordinary blessings of life are overlooked, for the very reason that they ought to be most prized, because they are most uniformly bestowed. They are most essential to our support; and when once they are withdrawn, we begin to find that they are also most essential to our comfort. Nothing raises the price of a blessing like its removal, whereas it was its continuance which should have taught us its value. We require novelties to awaken our gratitude; not considering that it is the duration of mercies which enhances their value. We want fresh excitements. We consider mercies long enjoyed as things of course, as things to which we have a sort of prescriptive claim; as if God had no right to withdraw what he has once bestowed, as if he were obliged to continue what he has once been pleased to confer.

God is the fountain from which all the streams of goodness flow; the centre from which all the rays of blessedness diverge. All our actions are therefore only good as they have a reference to him; the streams must revert back to their fountain, the rays must converge again to their centre.

Books.—For those who have much business and little time, it is a great and necessary art to learn to extract the essential spirit of an author from the body of his work; to know how to seize on the vital parts; to discern where his strength lies; and to separate it from those portions of the work which are superfluous, collateral, or merely ornamental.

In avoiding books which excite the passions, it would seem strange to include even some devotional works. Yet such as merely kindle warm feelings are not always the safest. Let us rather prefer those which, while they tend to raise a devotional spirit, awaken the affections without disordering them; which, while they elevate the desires, purify them; which show us our own nature, and lay open its corruptions. Such as show us the malignity of sin, the deceitfulness of our hearts, the feebleness of our best resolutions; such as teach us to pull off the mask from the fairest appearance, and discover every hiding-place where some lurking evil would conceal itself: such as show us not what we appear to others, but what we really are; such as, co-operating with our interior feelings, and showing us our natural state, point out our absolute need of a Redeemer, lead us to seek to him for pardon from a conviction that there is no other refuge, no other salvation. Let us be conversant with such writings as teach us that while we long to obtain the remission of our transgressions, we must not desire the remission of our duties. Let us seek for such a Saviour as will not only deliver us from the punishment of sin, but from the domination also.

The Arabian Nights and other oriental books of fable, though loose and faulty in many respects, yet have always a reference to the religion of the country. Nothing is introduced against the law of Mahomet; nothing subversive of the opinions of a Mussulman. I do not quarrel with books for having *no* religion, but for having a *false* religion. A book which in nothing opposes the principles of the Bible I would be far from calling a bad book, though the Bible was never named in it.

It is not sufficient to avoid reading pernicious books, care should be taken to prevent their circulation. This duty, however, it is to be feared, is too little regarded even by those who are sincere in religious profession.

When the French revolution had brought to light the fatal consequences of some of Voltaire's writings, some half-scrupulous persons, no longer willing to afford his fourscore volumes a place in their library, sold them at a low price. This measure, though it "stayed the plague" in their own houses, caused the infection to spread wider. The Ephesian magicians made no such compromise; they burned theirs.

We have too many elementary books. They are read too much and too long. The youthful mind, which was formerly sick from inanition, is now in danger from a plethora. Much, however, will depend on capacity and disposition. A child of slower parts may be indulged till nine years old with books which a lively genius will look down upon at seven. A girl of talents *will* read. To her, no excitement is wanting. The natural appetite is a sufficient incentive. The less brilliant child requires the allurement of lighter books. She wants encouragement as much as the other requires restraint.

Calamities.—Most of the calamities of human life originate with ourselves. Even sickness, shame, pain, and death, were not originally the infliction of God. But out of many evils, whether sent us by his immediate hand, or brought on us by our own faults, much eventual good is educed by him who, by turning our suffering to our benefit, repairs by grace the evils produced by sin. Without being the author of evil, the bare suggestion of which is blasphemy, he converts it to his own glory, by causing the effects of it to promote our good. If the virtuous suffer from the crimes of the wicked, it is because their imperfect goodness stood in need of chastisement. Even the wicked, who are suffering by their own sins, or the sins of each other, are sometimes brought back to God by mutual injuries, the sense of which awakens them to compunction for their own offences. God makes use of the faults even of good men to show them their own insufficiency, to abase them in their own eyes, to cure them of vanity and self-dependance. He makes use of their smaller failings to set them on the watch against great ones; of their imperfections, to put them on their guard against sins; of their faults of inadvertence, to increase their dread of such as are wilful. This superinduced vigilance teaches them to fear all the resemblances, and to shun all the approaches to sin. It is a salutary fear, which keeps them from using all the liberty they have; it leads them to avoid, not only whatever is decidedly wrong, but to stop short of what is doubtful, to keep clear of what is suspicious; well knowing the thin partitions which separate danger from destruction. It teaches them to watch the buddings and germinations of evil, to anticipate the pernicious fruit in the opening blossom.

As no calamity is too great for the power of Christianity to mitigate, so none is too small to experience its beneficial results.

Catechism.—The catechism was written for children, and contains all the seeds and principles of Christianity for men. It evidently requires much explanation, much development; still it furnishes a wide and important field for colloquial instruction, without which young persons can by no means understand a composition so admirable, but so condensed.

Character.—We are apt to call men good, because they are without certain bad qualities. But this is not only not knowing religion, it is not knowing human nature. All vices are not affinities; of course the very indulgence of one vice is not seldom an exclusion of another, as covetousness avoids profligacy, and ambition expels indolence: but though they are natural antipathies, they all spring from the same source; the same fountain of corrupt nature feeds both.

In describing a bad character, the Bible does not say that his actions are *flagitious*, but that "God is not in all his *thoughts*." This is the description of a thoroughly worldly man. Those who are given up completely to the world, to its maxims, its principles, its cares, or its pleasures, cannot entertain thoughts of God. And to be unmindful of his providence, to be regardless of his presence, to be insensible to his mercies, must be nearly as offensive to him as to deny his existence. Excessive dissipation, a supreme love of money, or an entire devotedness to ambition, drinks up that spirit, swallows up that affection, exhausts that vigour, starves that zeal, with which a Christian should devote himself to serve his Maker.

Charity.—I have often heard it regretted that ladies have no stated employment, no profession. It is a mistake; charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession. Men have little time or taste for details. Women of fortune have abundant leisure, which can in no way be so properly or so pleasantly filled up as in making themselves intimately acquainted with the worth and the wants of all within their reach. With their wants, because it is their bounden duty to administer to them; with their worth, because without this knowledge, they cannot administer prudently and appropriately.

The reason is particularly obvious, why the bounty of the affluent ought to be most liberally, though not exclusively, extended to the spot whence they derive their revenues. There seems indeed to be a double motive for it. The same act involves a duty both to God and to man. The largest bounty to the necessitous on our estates is rather justice than charity. It is but a kind of peppercorn acknowledgment to the great Lord and Proprietor of all, from whom we hold them. And to assist their own labouring poor is a kind of natural debt, which persons who possess great landed property owe to those, from the sweat of whose brow they derive their comforts, and even their riches. It is a commutation, which, as the advantage is greatly on our side, so is our duty to diminish the difference of paramount obligation.

The iniquity of our holy things requires much Christian vigilance. Next to not giving at all, the greatest fault is to give from ostentation. The contest is only between two sins. The motive robs the act of the very name of virtue, while the good work that is paid in praise, is stripped of the hope of higher retribution.

Some are ingenious in contriving, by a strange self-delusion, to swell the amount of their charity, by tacking to it extraneous items of a totally distinct character. The author was formerly acquainted with a lady of rank, who, though her benevolence was suspected to bear no proportion to the splendour of her establishment, was yet rather too apt to make her boun-

ties a subject of conversation. After enumerating the various instances of her beneficence, she often concluded by saying, "notwithstanding my large family, I give all this in charity, *besides paying the poor rates:*" thus converting a compulsory act, to which all are equally subject, into a voluntary bounty.

Childhood.—The mind should be formed early, no less than the person; and for the same reason. Providence has plainly indicated childhood to be the season of instruction, by communicating at that period such flexibility to the organs, such attention to the memory, such quickness to the apprehension, such inquisitiveness to the temper, such alacrity to the animal spirits, and such impressibility to the affections, as are not possessed at any subsequent period. We are therefore bound, by every tie of duty, to follow these obvious designations of Providence, by moulding that flexibility to the most durable ends; by storing that memory with the richest knowledge; by pointing that apprehension to the highest objects; by giving to that alacrity its best direction; by turning that inquisitiveness to the noblest intellectual purposes: and, above all, by converting that impressibility of heart to the most exalted moral uses.

Christianity.—Christianity is not merely a religion of authority; the soundest reason embraces most confidently what the most explicit revelation has taught, and the deepest inquirer is usually the most convinced Christian. The reason of philosophy is a disputing reason, that of Christianity an obeying reason. The glory of the pagan religion consisted in virtuous sentiments; the glory of the Christian in the pardon and the subjugation of sin. The humble Christian may say with one of the ancient fathers, "I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed."

Christianity has no by-laws, no particular exemptions, no individual immunities. That there is no appropriate way of attaining salvation for a prince or a philosopher, is probably one reason why greatness and wisdom have so often rejected it. But if rank cannot plead its privileges, genius cannot claim its distinctions. That Christianity did not owe its success to the arts of rhetoric, or the sophistry of the schools, but that God intended by it "to make foolish the wisdom of this world," actually explains why the "disputers of this world" have always been its enemies.

Christianity was a second creation. It completed the first order of things, and introduced a new one of its own, not subversive but perfective of the original. It produced an entire revolution in the condition of men, and accomplished a change in the state of the world, which all its confederated power, wit, and philosophy, not only could not effect, but could not even conceive. It threw such a preponderating weight into the scale of morals, by the superinduction of the new principle of faith in a Redeemer, as rendered the hitherto insupportable trials of the afflicted comparatively light. It gave strength to weakness, spirit to action, motive to virtue, certainty to doubt, patience to suffering, light to darkness, life to death.

The Commandments.—If the promises are our aliment, the commandments are our work; and a temperate Christian ought to desire nourishment only in order to carry him through his business. If he so supinely rest on the one as to grow sensual and indolent, he might become not only unwilling, but incapacitated for the other. We must not expect to live upon cordials, which only serve to inflame, without strengthening. Even without these supports, which we are more ready to desire than to put ourselves in the way to obtain, there is in humble trust in God, and in a simple reliance in his word—there is a repose of spirit, a freedom from solicitude, in a lowly confidence in him, for which the world has nothing to give in exchange.

Commerce.—I believe that an overflowing commerce and the excessive opulence it has introduced, though favourable to all the splendours of art and mechanic ingenuity, yet have lowered the standard of taste, and debilitated the mental energies. They are advantageous to luxury, but fatal to intellect. It has added to the brilliancy of the drawing-room, but deducted from that of the inhabitants. It has given perfection to our mirrors, our candlesticks, our gilding, our inlaying, and our sculpture, but it has communicated a torpor to the imagination, and enervated our intellectual vigour.

Conscience.—There is a fatal way of lulling the conscience, by entertaining diminishing thoughts of sins long since committed. We persuade ourselves to forget them, and we therefore persuade ourselves that they are not remembered by God. But though distance diminishes objects to the eye of the beholder, it does not actually lessen them. Their real magnitude remains the same. Perhaps, if we remember them, God may forget them, especially if our remembrance be such as to induce a sound repentance. If we remember them not, he assuredly will.

Contentment.—As godliness cannot subsist without contentment, so neither can true contentment spring from any other than an inward principle of real piety. All contentment which has not its foundation in religion is merely constitutional, animal hilarity, the flow of blood and spirits in the more sanguine character; coldness and apathy, in the more indifferent. A spirit of contentment is stifling covetousness in its birth; it is strangling the serpent in the cradle.

Controversy.—As truth will be assaulted, it must be defended. Controversial discussions, therefore, are not only harmless but useful, provided truth is the inspiring motive, and charity the medium of conducting them. Truth is frequently beaten out by conflicting blows, when it might have contracted rust and impurity by lying quiet, uninquired into and unassailed. We are in danger of growing negligent about a truth which is never attacked, or of surrounding it with our own fancies, and appending to it our own excrescences; while the assailant

teaches even the friendly examiners to clear the principle of all foreign mixtures, and, by giving it more purity, to give it a wider circulation.

Conversation.—Books alone will never form the character. It is conversation which must unfold, enlarge, and apply the use of books. Without that familiar comment on what is read, mere reading might only fill the mind with fallacious models of character, and false maxims of life. It is conversation which must develop what is obscure, raise what is low, correct what is defective, qualify what is exaggerated, and gently, and almost insensibly, raise the understanding, form the heart, and fix the taste; and by giving just proportions to the mind, teach it the power of fair appreciation, draw it to adopt what is reasonable, to love what is good, to taste what is pure, and to imitate what is elegant.

Conversion.—The primitive church carried their incredulity of the appearances of repentance so far, as to require not only years of sorrow for sin, but perseverance in piety, before they would admit offenders to their communion; and, as a test of their sincerity, required the uniform practice of those virtues most opposite to their former vices. Were this made the criterion now, we should not so often hear such flaming accounts of converts so exultingly reported, before time has been allowed to try their stability. More especially, we should not hear of so many triumphant relations of death-bed converts, in whom the symptoms must frequently be too equivocal to admit the positive decision of human wisdom.

Courage.—There are other ways of exercising courage than in the field of battle. There are more exalted means of showing spirit than by sending or accepting a challenge. To sustain a fit of sickness, may exhibit as true heroism as to lead an army. To bear a deep affliction well calls for as high exertion of soul, as to storm a town; and to meet death with Christian resolution, is an act of courage in which many a woman has triumphed, and many a philosopher, and even some generals, have failed.

Cowper.—Such an original as Cowper must naturally have a herd of imitators. If they cannot attain to his excellences, his faults are always attainable. The resemblance between the master and the scholar is found chiefly in his defects. The determined imitator of an easy writer becomes vapid; of a sublime one, absurd. Cowper's ease appeared his most imitable charm; but ease aggravated is insipidity. His occasional negligences, his disciples adopted uniformly. In Cowper there might sometimes be carelessness in the verse, but the verse itself was sustained by the vigour of the sentiment. The imitator forgot that Cowper's strength lay in the thought; that his buoyant spirit always supported itself; that the figure, though amplified, was never incongruous, and the illustration, though new, was never false.

Devotion.—To maintain a devotional spirit, two things are especially necessary—habitually to cultivate the disposition, and habitually to avoid whatever is unfavourable to it.

May we venture to express a wish that some persons of more piety than discernment, among whom there are those who value themselves on being more particularly the disciples of St Paul, would always imitate his chastened language. When the apostle pours out the fulness of his heart to his Redeemer, every expression is as full of veneration as of love. His freedom is a filial freedom, while *their* devout effusions are sometimes mixed with adjectives which betray a familiarity bordering on irreverence.

This remark applies more particularly to certain hymns, written in a very devout strain, but with a devotion rather amatory than reverential.

Discipline.—It is not some signal act of mortification, but an habitual state of discipline, which will prepare us for great trials. A soul ever on the watch, fervent in prayer, diligent in self-inspection, frequent in meditation, fortified against the vanities of time by repeated views of eternity—all the avenues to such a heart will be in good measure shut against temptation, barred in a great degree against the tempter.

Duty.—Business must have its period as well as devotion. We were sent into this world to act as well as to pray; active duties must be performed as well as devout exercises. Even relaxation must have its interval: only let us be careful that the indulgence of the one do not destroy the effect of the other; that our pleasures do not encroach on the time, or deaden the spirit, of our devotions; let us be careful that our cares, occupations, and amusements, may be always such that we may not be afraid to implore the divine blessings on them; this is the criterion of their safety, and of our duty. Let us endeavour that in each, in all, one continually growing sentiment and feeling of loving, serving, and pleasing God, maintain its predominant station in the heart.

Economy.—A discreet woman adjusts her expenses to her revenue. Every thing knows its time, and every person has his place. She will live within her income, be it large or small: if large, she will not be luxurious; if small, she will not be mean. Proportion and propriety are among the best secrets of domestic wisdom; and there is no surer test of integrity and judgment than a well-proportioned expenditure.

A sensible woman loves to imitate that order which is stamped on the whole creation of God. All the operations of nature are uniform, even in their changes, and regular in their infinite variety. Nay, the great Author of nature himself disdains not to be called the God of order.

Education.—We often hear of the necessity of being qualified for the world; and this is the grand object in the education of our children, overlooking the difficult duty of qualifying them for retirement. But if part of the immense pains which are taken to fit them for the company of others, were employed in fitting them for their own company, in teaching them the duties of solitude as well as of society, this earth would be a happier place than it is; a training suitable to a world of such brief duration, would be a better preparatory study for a world which will have no end.

Employment.—If the Christian cannot glorify God by serving others, he knows that he has always something to do at home; some evil temper to correct, some wrong propensity to reform, some crooked practice to straighten. He will never be at a loss for employment, while there is a sin or a misery in the world; he will never be idle, while there is a distress to be relieved in another, or a corruption to be cured in his own heart. We have employments assigned to us for every circumstance in life. When we are alone, we have our thoughts to watch; in the family, our tempers; in company, our tongues.

Epitaphs.—If we were called upon to collect the greatest quantity of hyperbole—falsehood might be too harsh a term—in the least given time and space, we should do well to search for it in those sacred edifices expressly consecrated to truth. There we should see the ample mass of canonizing kindness which fills their mural decorations, expressed in all those flattering records inscribed by every variety of claim, in addition to what is dedicated to real merit, by real sorrow: we should hear of tears which were never shed, grief which was never felt, praise which was never earned: we should see what is raised by decent demands of connexion, by tender but undiscerning friendship, by poetic license, by eloquent gratitude for testamentary favours. It is an amiable though not a correct feeling in human nature, that, fancying we have not done justice to certain characters during their lives, we run into the error of supposed compensation by over-estimating them after their decease.

Eternity.—Eternity is a depth which no geometry can measure, no arithmetic calculate, no imagination conceive, no rhetoric describe. The eye of a dying Christian seems gifted to penetrate depths hid from the wisdom of philosophy. It looks athwart the dark valley without dismay, cheered by the bright scene beyond it. It looks with a kind of chastised impatience to that land where happiness will be only holiness perfected. There all the promises of the gospel will be accomplished. There afflicted virtue will rejoice at its past trials, and acknowledge their subservience to its present bliss. There the secret self-denials of the righteous shall be recognised and rewarded. There all the hopes of the Christian shall have their complete consummation.

Experimental Religion.—It is the fashion of the times to try experiments in the arts, in agriculture, in philosophy. In every science, the diligent professor is always afraid there may be some secret which he has not yet attained, some occult principle which would reward the labour of discovery, something even which the assiduous and intelligent have actually found out, but which has hitherto eluded *his* pursuit. And shall the Christian stop short in his scrutiny? shall he not examine and inquire till he lays hold on the very heart and core of religion?

Why should experimental philosophy be the prevailing study, and experimental religion be branded as the badge of enthusiasm, the cant of a hollow profession? Shall we never labour to establish the distinction between appearance and reality, between studying religion critically, and embracing it practically? between having our conduct creditable, and our heart sanctified? Shall we not aspire to do the best things from the highest motives, and elevate our aims with our attainments? Why should we remain in the vestibule, when the sanctuary is open? Why should we be contented to dwell in the outer courts, when we are invited to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus?

Extremes in Religion.—I have known many men who, from their dread of a burning zeal, have taken refuge in a freezing indifference! As to the two extremes of heat and cold, neither of them is the true climate of Christianity; yet the fear of each drives men of opposite complexions into the other, instead of fixing them in the temperate zone which lies between them, and which is the region of genuine piety.

Extremes.—Christianity may be said to suffer between two criminals, but it is difficult to determine by which she suffers most; whether by that uncharitable bigotry which disguises her divine character, and speculatively adopts the fagots and the flames of inquisitorial intolerance; or by that indiscriminate candour, that conceding slackness, which, by stripping her of her appropriate attributes, reduces her to something scarcely worth contending for; to something which, instead of making her the religion of Christ, generalizes her into any religion which may choose to adopt her. The one distorts her lovely lineaments into caricature, and throws her graceful figure into gloomy shadow; the other, by daubing her over with colours not her own, renders her form indistinct, and obliterates her features. In the first instance, she excites little affection; in the latter, she is not recognised.

Faith.—As faith is of a spiritual nature, it cannot be kept alive without spiritual means. It requires for its sustenance aliment congenial with itself. Meditation familiarizes it with its object; prayer keeps it close to its end. If thus cherished by perpetual exercise, sustained by the habitual contemplation of the oracles of God, and watered with the dews of his grace, it becomes the pregnant seed of every Christian virtue.

Fame.—The eager desire of fame is a sort of separation line between Paganism and Christianity. The ancient philosophers have left us many shining examples of moderation in earthly things, and of the contempt of riches. So far the light of reason, and a noble self-denial, carried them; and many a Christian may blush at these instances of their superiority: but of an indifference to fame, of a deadness to human applause, except as founded on loftiness of spirit, disdain of their judges, and self-sufficient pride, I do not recollect any instance.

Feelings.—A person of a cold phlegmatic temper, who laments that he wants that fervour in his love of the Supreme Being which is apparent in more ardent characters, may take comfort, if he find the same indifference re-

specting his worldly attachments. But if his affections are intense towards the perishable things of earth while they are dead to such as are spiritual, it does not prove that he is destitute of passions, but only that they are not directed to the proper object. If, however, he love God with all that measure of feeling with which God has endowed him, he will not be punished or rewarded because the stock is greater or smaller than that of some others of his fellow-creatures.

Flattery.—Did we turn our thoughts inward, it would abate much of the self-complacency with which we swallow the flattery of others. Flattery hurts not him who flatters not himself. If we examined ourselves keenly, we should frequently blush at the praises our actions receive. Let us, then, conscientiously inquire not only what we do, but whence and why we do it—from what motive, and to what end.

Friendship.—I have often been amused with observing what a magic transformation the same event produces on two opposite classes of characters. The misfortunes of their acquaintance convert worldly friends into instantaneous strictness of principle. The faults of the distressed are produced as a plea for their own hardhearted covetousness; while that very misfortune so relaxes the strictness of good men, that the faults are forgotten in the calamity; and they, who had been perpetually warning the prodigal of his impending ruin, when that ruin comes, are the first to relieve him. The worldly friend sees only the errors of the sufferer, the Christian sees only his distress.

Gibbon.—The preference of remote to approximating opinions is by no means confined to the religious world. The author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," though so passionate an admirer of the prophet of Arabia, as to raise a suspicion of his own Islamism; though so rapturous a eulogist of the apostate Julian, as to raise a suspicion of his own polytheism; yet with an inconsistency not uncommon to unbelief, he treats the stout orthodoxy of the vehement Athanasius with more respect than he shows to the "scanty creed" of a contemporary philosopher and theologian, whose cold and comfortless doctrines were much less removed from his own. [The person here meant was Dr. Priestley.]

Good Works.—One would imagine, that some who so loudly insist that we should be saved by works, must mean works of supererogation, and that they depended for salvation on the transfer of the superfluity of the merits of others to themselves; for it is remarkable, that *they* trust their future bliss most confidently to good works, who have the slenderest portion of their own to produce.

The Gospel.—Had the first apostles been men of genius, they might have injured the purity of the gospel by bringing their ingenuity into it. Had they been men of learning, they might have imported from the schools of Greece and Rome, each from his own sect, some of its peculiar infusions, and thus have vitiated the simplicity of the gospel. Had they been critics and philosophers, there might have been endless debates which part of Christianity was the power of God, and which the result of men's wisdom. Thus, though corruptions soon crept into the church, yet no impurities could reach the gospel itself. Some of its teachers became heretical, but the pure word remained unadulterated. However the philosophizing or the Judaizing teachers might subsequently infuse their own errors into their own preaching, the gospel preserved its own integrity. They might mislead their followers, but they could not deteriorate the New Testament.

Grace.—Grace being a new principle added to our natural powers, as it determines the desires to a higher object, so it adds vigour to their activity. We shall best prove its dominion over us by desiring to exert ourselves in the cause of heaven with the same energy with which we once exerted ourselves in the cause of the world. The world was too little to fill our whole capacity.

Grace will not thrive abundantly in that heart which does not believe it to be the seed of glory.

Happiness.—Happiness is a serious thing. While pleasure manifests itself by extravagant gayety, exuberant spirits, and overt acts, happiness retreats to its own proper region—the heart. There, concentrating its feelings, it contemplates its treasures, meditates on its enjoyments, and still more fondly on its hopes; counts up its mercies, and feels the consummation of them in looking to the fountain from whence they flow; feels every blessing immeasurably heightened by the heart-cheering reflection that the most exquisite human pleasures are not the perfection of his nature, but only a gracious earnest, a bounteous prelibation of that blessedness which is without measure, and shall be without end.

Humility.—There is no work which more clearly distinguishes that humility which has the love of God for its principle, from its counterfeit, a false and superficial politeness, than this—that while the last flatters, in order to extort in return more praise than its due, humility, like the divine principle from which it springs, seeketh not even its own.

Ignorance.—I once lent a person of rank and talents an admirable sermon, written by one of our first divines. Though deeply pious, it was composed with uncommon spirit and elegance, and I thought it did not contain one phrase which could offend the most fastidious critic. When he returned it, he assured me that he liked it much, on the whole, and should have approved of it altogether, but for one methodistical expression. To my utter astonishment, he pointed to the exceptionable passage, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The chapter and verse not being mentioned, he never suspected it was a quotation from the Bible!

The Imagination.—It is important that we should never suffer our faith, and more than our

love, to be depressed or elevated, by mistaking for its own operations, the ramblings of a busy imagination. The steady principle of faith must not look for its character to the vagaries of a mutable and fantastic fancy.

Indolence.—A grave and sedate indolence, investing itself with the respectable attribute of moderation, eats out the heart's core of piety. These somnolent characters communicate the repose which they enjoy; they excite no alarm, because they feel none. Their rule of observances is regularly brought in; their list of forms is completely made out. Forms, it is true, are valuable things, when they are "used as a dead hedge to secure the quick:" but here the observances are the whole of the fence. The dead fence is not considered as a protection, but a substitute. The teacher and the taught, neither disturbing nor disturbed, but soothing and soothed, reciprocate civilities, and exchange commendations. If little good is done, it is well; if no offence is given, it is better; if no superfluity of zeal is imputed, it is best of all.

Infidelity.—Among the triumphs of religion which we have witnessed, it is not the least considerable, that whereas Christianity was originally charged with a design to overturn states and empires, we have seen the crime completely turned over to the accusers; we have seen the avowed adversaries of Christ become the strenuous subverters of law and government.

Innocence.—Innocence can never be pleaded as a ground of acceptance, because the thing does not exist. Innocence excludes the necessity of repentance; and where there is no sin, there can be no need of a Saviour. Wherever, therefore, we may be in comparison with others, innocence can afford no plea for our acceptance, without annulling the great plan of our redemption.

Justification and Sanctification.—The two cardinal points of our religion, justification and sanctification, are near relatives; they imply a reciprocal relation; nor do I call that state Christianity, in which either is separately and exclusively maintained. The union of these manifests the dominion of religion in the heart, by increasing its humility, by purifying its affections, by setting it above the contaminations, the maxims, and habits of the world; by detaching it from the vanities of time, and elevating it to a desire for the riches of eternity.

Learning.—What has been said of those who affect to despise birth, has also been applied to those who decry learning; neither is ever undervalued, except by men who are destitute of them; and it is worthy of observation, that as literature and religion both sunk together in the dark ages, so both emerged at the same auspicious era.

Learning has this strong recommendation, that it is the offspring of a most valuable virtue; I mean, industry; a quality on which I am ashamed to see pagans frequently set a higher value than we seem to do.

Life.—We complain that life is short, and yet throw away the best part of it; only making over to religion that portion which is good for nothing else; life would be long enough, if we assigned its best period to its best purpose.

Love of God.—Our love to God arises out of want; God's love to us, out of fulness. Our indigence draws us to that power which can relieve, and to that goodness which can bless us. His overflowing love delights to make us partakers of the bounties he graciously imparts, not only in the gifts of his providence, but in the richer communications of his grace. We can only be said to love God, when we endeavour to glorify him,—when we desire a participation of his nature, when we study to imitate his perfections.

Marriage.—When young persons marry, even with the fairest prospects, they should never forget that infirmity is inseparably bound up with their very nature, and that in bearing one another's burdens, they fulfil one of the highest duties of the union.

Milton.—Milton was an enthusiast both in religion and politics. Many enthusiasts with whom he was connected, doubtless condemned the exercise of his imagination in his immortal poem, as a crime; but his genius was too mighty to be restrained by opposition, and his imagination too vast and powerful to be kept down by a party. Had he confined himself to his prose writings, weighty and elaborate as some of them are, how little service would he have done the world, and how little would he now be read or quoted! In his lifetime, politics might blind his enemies, and fanaticism his friends. But now, who, comparatively, reads Iconoclastes? who does not read Comus.

Music.—I look upon the great prominance of music in female education, to be a source of more mischief than is suspected; not from any evil in the thing itself, but from its being such a gulf of time as really to leave little room for solid acquisitions. The monstrous proportion, or rather disproportion, of life which it swallows up, has converted an innocent diversion into a positive sin. I question if many gay men devote more hours in a day to idle purposes, than the daughters of many pious parents spend in this amusement. All these hours the mind lies fallow, improvement is at a stand, if even it does not retrograde. Nor is it the shreds and scraps of time, stolen in the intervals of better things, that is so devoted; but it is the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous, the spirits light, the intellect awake and fresh, and the whole being wound up by the refreshment of sleep, and animated by the return of light and life for nobler services.

Natural Religion.—Even natural religion was little understood by those who professed it; it was full of obscurity till viewed by the clear light of the gospel. Not only natural religion remained to be clearly comprehended, but reason itself remained to be carried to its highest pitch in the countries where revelation is professed. Natural religion could not see itself by its own light: reason could not extricate itself from the labyrinth of error and ignorance in

which false religion had involved the world. Grace has raised nature. Revelation has given a lift to reason, and taught her to despise the follies and corruptions which obscured her brightness. If nature is now delivered from darkness, it was the helping hand of revelation which raised her from the rubbish in which she lay buried.

Obedience.—Scripture abounds with every motive to obedience, both rational and spiritual. But it would achieve but half its work, had it stopped there. As peccable creatures, we require not only inducements to obedience, but a heart, and a power, and a will to obey: assistance is as necessary as motives, power as indispensable as precept—all which requisites are not only promised by the word, but conferred by the Spirit of God.

Opinions.—A religion which consists in opinions only, will not advance us in our progress to heaven: it is apt to inflate the mind with the pride of disputation; and victory is so commonly the object of debate, that eternity slides out of sight.

The finest theory never yet carried any man to heaven. A religion of notions, which occupies the mind without filling the heart, may obstruct but cannot advance the salvation of men.

Opportunities.—A Christian cannot tell in the morning what opportunities he may have of doing good during the day: but if he be a real Christian, he can tell that he will try to keep his heart open, his mind prepared, his affections alive to do whatever may occur in the way of duty. He will, as it were, stand in the way to receive the orders of Providence; doing good is his vocation.

Party.—Would that it could not be said, that religion has her parties as well as politics! Those who endeavour to steer clear of all extremes in either, are in danger of being reprobated by both. It is a hardship for persons who, having considered it as a Christian duty to cultivate a spirit of moderation in thinking and of candour in judging, that when these dispositions are brought into action, they frequently incur a harsher censure than the errors which it was their chief aim to avoid.

Philanthropy.—Among the peculiarities of Christianity, it is one of the most striking, that they who, in Scripture language, love not the world, nor the things of the world, are yet the persons in it who are farthest from misanthropes. They love the beings of whom the world is composed, better than he who courts and flatters it. They seek not its favours nor its honours, but they give a more substantial proof of affection, —they seek its improvement, its happiness, its salvation.

Quiet.—We hear those complain most that they can get no quiet, whose want of it arises from the irruptions of their own passions. Peace is no local circumstance. It does not depend on the situation of the house, but of the heart. True quiet is only to be found in the extirpation of evil tempers, in the victory over unruly appetites; it is found, not merely in the absence of temptation, but in the dominion of religion. It arises from the cultivation of that principle which alone can effectually smooth down the swellings of pride, still the restlessness of envy, and calm the turbulence of impure desires. It depends on the submission of the will, on that peace of God which passeth all understanding, on the grace of Christ, on the consolations of the Spirit. With these blessings, which are promised to all who seek them, we may find tranquillity in Cheapside; without them, we may live a life of tumult on the Eddystone.

Reason.—If the human reasoner despises Christianity, some Christians are too much disposed to vilify reason. This contempt they did not learn of St. Paul. He never taught that to neglect an exact method of such consequences can be deduced from his writings. Revealed religion, indeed, happily for the poor and illiterate, may be firmly believed, and vitally understood, without a very accurate judgment, or any high cultivation of the moral powers. But without both, without a thorough acquaintance with the arguments, without a knowledge of the evidences, it never can be successfully defended. Ignorance on these points would throw such a weight into the scale of skepticism, as would weaken if it did not betray the cause of truth. In our days, an ignorant teacher of religion is "a workman that *needeth* to be ashamed." He should carefully cultivate his reason, were it only to convince himself of its imperfections.

Right.—Nothing seems more difficult to settle than the standard of right. Every man has a standard of his own, which he considers as of universal application. One makes his own tastes, desires, and appetites his rule of right; another the example of certain individuals fallible like himself; a third, and indeed the generality, the maxims, habits, and manners of the fashionable part of the world.

Shame.—Very young men, from timidity, are led to risk their eternal happiness through the dread of a laugh, though they know that they have not only religion but reason on their side; yet it requires a hardy virtue to repel a sneer, and an intrepid principle to confront a sarcasm. Thus their own mind loses its firmness; religion loses their support; the world loses the benefit which their example would afford; and they themselves become liable to the awful charge which is denounced against him who is ashamed of his Christian profession.

Solitude.—In complete solitude the eye wants objects, the heart wants attachments, the understanding wants reciprocation. The character loses its tenderness when it has nothing to love, its firmness when it has none to strengthen it, its sweetness when it has nothing to sooth it, its patience when it meets no contradiction, its humility when it is surrounded by dependants, and its delicacy in the conversation of the unin formed. Where the intercourse is very unequal, society is something worse than solitude.

Truth.—He who possesses a sound principle, and strong relish of truth, in his own mind, will possess a touchstone by which to try this quality in others, and which will enable him to detect false notions, to see through false man-

ners, and to despise false attractions. This discerning faculty is the more important, as the high breeding of very polished society presents so plausible an imitation of goodness, as to impose on the superficial observer, who, satisfied with the image and superscription, never inquires whether the coin be counterfeit or sterling.

Vanity.—Vanity differs from the other vices in this; *they* commonly are only opposite to the one contrary virtue, while this vice has a kind of ubiquity, is on the watch to intrude everywhere, and weakens all the virtues which it cannot destroy. I believe vanity was the harpy of the ancient poets, which they tell us tainted whatever it touched.

Works of Wit.—Let us rescue from the hands of the profane and the impure the monopoly of wit which they affect to possess and which they would possess, if no good reasoning would make men sounder divines. No men had written works of elegant literature, if all good men totally despised them.

Zeal.—Zeal is not so much an individual virtue, as the principle which gives life and colouring, as the spirit which gives grace and benignity, as the temper which gives warmth and energy to every other. It is that feeling which exalts the relish of every duty, and sheds a lustre on the practice of every virtue; which, embellishing every image of the mind with its glowing teints, animates every quality of the heart with its invigorating motion. It may be said of zeal among the virtues, as of memory among the faculties, that though it singly never made a great man, yet no man has ever made himself conspicuously great where it has been wanting.

THE END.

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